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ABSTRACT

This study described ways in which two groups of urban, low-socioeconomic children remained the same and differed after a transition year in skills-based curriculum and a continuing year in whole language curriculum. Both groups had experienced whole language instruction in the first two years in kindergarten and first grade. This investigation arose from the need to better understand children's literacy learning and sought to document knowledge construction from a learners' perspectives. Learner sense making was documented through quantitative and qualitative methods including pre- and post testing, field notes, learner audio taped manuscripts, video tapes, and written artifacts. Among the major findings were: (1) standardized/normed test comparison showed both groups of children were similar; (2) oral reading and a test of reading schemata suggested that development in learning to read cut across curricular differences; (3) reading and writing interviews differed by curriculum with children continuing in whole language retaining more positive responses; (4) children continuing in whole language wrote more frequently and wrote more complex and longer texts; (5) the transition, skills-based group exhibited a loss of a sense of themselves as readers and writers whereas the continuing, whole language group retained this sense making response; and (6) both groups showed similarities and differences in response to literature. Children with two years of whole language schooling had the academic skills necessary to succeed in the skills-based curriculum. However, some children changed from an active and motivated stances to a passive and inactive stance. Mid-year changes in the skills-based curriculum that provided more flexible learning opportunities and use of children's literature resulted in more positively motivated behaviors in these same children. Students continuing in whole language curriculum had similar academic skills, showed no passivity, and retained stability in talk and action documenting a disposition for learning. (Author/AA)

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Making Sense of Reading and Writing in Urban Classrooms: Understanding At-risk Children's Knowledge Construction in Different Curricula

Final Report to the
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
Grant Award No. R117E10261-91

Penny A. Freppon
University of Cincinnati

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ABSTRACT

This study described ways in which two groups of urban, low-socioeconomic children remained the same and differed after a transition year in skills-based curriculum and a continuing year in whole language curriculum. Both groups had experienced whole language instruction in the first two years, This investigation built on a line of research that arose from the need to better understand children's literacy learning and sought to document knowledge construction from learners' perspectives. Learner sense making was documented through quantitative and qualitative methods including pre- and post testing, field notes, learner audio taped transcripts, video tapes, and written artifacts. Several major findings emerged: (a) pre / post tests results were not statistically significant, (b) standardized /normed test comparison showed both groups of children were similar, (c) oral reading and a test of reading schemata suggested that development in learning to read cut across curricular differences, (d) reading and writing interviews differed by curriculum with children continuing in whole language retaining more positive responses, (e) children continuing in whole language wrote more frequently and wrote more complex and longer texts, (f) the transition, skills-based group exhibited a loss of a sense of themselves as readers and writers where as the continuing, whole language group retained this sense making response, (g) both groups showed similarities and differences in response to literature, (h) both groups retained their interest in accuracy regardless of curricular differences. Children with two years of whole language schooling had the academic skills necessary to succeed in the skills-based curriculum. However, some children changed from an active and motivated stance to a passive and inactive stance. Mid-year changes in the skills-based curriculum that provided more flexible learning opportunities and use of children's literature resulted more positively motivated behaviors in these same children. Students continuing in whole language curriculum had similar academic skills, showed no passivity, and retained stability in talk and action documenting a disposition for learning.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to describe the sense making of two groups of low -socioeconomic, urban children. Specifically, the investigation provided information about children who experienced a whole language curriculum in kindergarten and first-grade and then either, (a) made a transition to a skills-based second grade or, (b) continued in a whole language second grade. While most public school curriculum is skills-based, the whole language approach is increasing (Herbert & Fisher, 1990). Understanding the ways in which these young readers and writers interpreted a change to a skills-based curriculum and the ways they interpreted continuing in whole language curriculum is critical.

This investigation contributes to a line of research based on the need to better understand children's literacy learning by documenting knowledge construction from the learners' perspective (see Dahl, & Freppon, 1992; Dahl, Freppon, & McIntyre, 1992; Freppon, & Dahl, 1991, Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991; Purcell-Gates,1989; McIntyre, 1992; McIntyre & Freppon, 1992). The past and current investigations also contribute to understanding the effects of different instructional contexts on the students we worry most about (Allen, 1990). The children involved in these investigations are from a population disproportionately represented in failure in U. S. public schools (Allen & Mason; 1989; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991; Smith-Burke, 1989). It is critical to expand the research on these children because early difficulties in literacy learning tend to persist throughout children's school lives (An Imperiled Generation, 1988).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Several theories undergird this investigation. One strand was the nature of learning itself. Children's learning was viewed as transactional (Rosenblatt, 1989) and learners' knowledge construction seen as transactive interpretations revealed in patterns of talk and action within the social milieu of classrooms. Learning to read and write in school is a social -psycholinguistic process (Bloome & Green, 1984; Dyson, 1991). Children's sense making results from transactions among many factors. In this study the focus was on the dynamics among learners' written language knowledge, their stance toward literacy, and the interactions occurring in contrasting curricula (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, &

Klausner, 1985; Dahl & Freppon, 1992; Dyson, 1989; Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991).

Another strand was on the differences between contrasting curricula, (i.e. skills-based and whole language). Conventional skills-based curriculum is grounded in the view that written language is learned through practice of various skills and sub-skills needed to decode and encode. Skills-based instruction, and it's scope and sequence are curriculum centered. Skills are taught sequentially and prescribed reading and writing tasks are used as vehicles for children's learning. There is an assumption that children's engagement in skill practice results in desired learning outcomes. Thus, emphasis on accuracy, neatness, and accomplishment of specific amounts of practice characterizes skill-based instruction (Knapp & Shields, 1990). Instructional materials consist most often of basal readers, workbooks and worksheets, and various paper and pencil activities commonly associated with "seatwork". Discrete skill practice, a high degree of accuracy, and frequent testing are seen as pivotal in the development of reading and writing achievement (DeFord, 1984). In this curriculum the teacher structures and guides learners' engagement in predetermined skill practice or drill. Instructional techniques include teacher lecture, explanation, and question and answer activities. The role of the learner is to receive information through this practice and from the teacher.

In contrast, whole language instruction is grounded in a view of learning influenced by several disciplines including linguistic, cognitive psychology, and human learning itself (Chomsky, 1965; Goodman, 1967; Rogoff and Lave,1984; Vygotsky, 1962). The whole language perspective holds that written language is learned primarily through learner transactions with functional and meaningful activities. The curriculum is child and teacher centered. Materials, activities, and written language interactions evolve from the interests, needs, and expertise of learners in the classroom (DeFord, 1984; Newman, 1985). The whole language perspective holds that children learn primarily from whole to part and thus acquire specific reading and writing skills through engagement in the actual processes themselves (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991; Goodman, 1986; Smith, 1986). Ownership is a critical factor involving learner preference, choice, and interest. Instructional materials encompass trade books, children's own writings, and a variety of printed matter. Whole language teaching generally follows an apprenticeship model. Learners self-select reading and writing activities and the teacher supports and guides their efforts. Instructional techniques include teacher demonstration and modeling of conventional reading and writing with an expectation that children increase approximations to conventional literacy as they acquire skills, concepts, and motivation. The children's role is that of the active language learner (Halliday, 1978; Holdaway, 1979; Wells, 1986).

Finally, research theory itself guided the current investigation. This project was an ethnography and an ethnology (involving comparisons of learner interpretations in different instructional settings). The study incorporated a variety of data gathering techniques and the design and method followed the guidelines of ethnographic research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Rigorous analysis, including outside expert assistance and interrater checks, was conducted. Review of design, method, and analysis by several expert consultants helped guard against bias and ensure the strength of the project.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research in several areas frame this study. These areas include : (a) failure of urban, low-SES children to acquire adequate literacy and social and cultural influences on literacy attainment, (b) emergent literacy and the transactional nature of the learning process, (c) the importance of motivation in the learning process, (d) theoretical and curricular differences in conventional, skills-based and whole language classrooms and the outcomes of literacy research in different curricula.

Numerous studies document that despite major intervention programs, increased spending for remedial help (usually within conventional curriculum), and massive attempts to balance schools racially, low-SES children fail to achieve satisfactory progress in reading and writing (Berlowitz & Durand, 1980; Ogbu, 1985; Smith-Burke, 1989). At-risk populations are known to experience cultural conflicts in public schooling. (Ferriero & Teberosky, 1982; Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1983; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984). Factors such as the social orientation toward written language have been identified as critical in shaping literacy experiences of urban African American and white Appalachian communities (Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates 1992; Teale, 1986). These orientations are relevant to the current study since urban African American and white Appalachian communities typify the low-SES groups in the selected sites in the midwest.

Although the socioeconomic status of children in schools is important, this factor alone does not seem to be the key variable. The amount and kind of literacy-related activities available to the child affects learning to read and write (Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1981; Teale, 1986). Researchers in emergent literacy have shown that the process of becoming literate begins before the onset of formal schooling and is shaped by social and cultural contexts. Children begin school with varied responses toward learning about reading and writing. Studies of young children's learning in typical urban classrooms documents a mismatch between what children know at the start of schooling and the curriculum they experience (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991). Investigations of programs that create a closer match with children's initial and evolving knowledge, concepts, and attitudes indicates that public schools can have a positive effect on at-risk populations' learning outcomes. For example, the KEEP program (Au, 1991), Reading Recovery programs (DeFord, Lyons, & Pinnel, 1991; Pinnel, 1989), and exemplary kindergarten initiatives (Martinez, Cheyney, McBrown, Hemmeter & Teale, 1989) show that children can be helped to improve literacy learning.

Because of the transactional nature of learning, documenting children's knowledge about written language before entering a third year of schooling and after experiencing a different curriculum is relevant to understanding how students learn or fail to learn. Transaction is defined by Rosenblatt as an "...on going process in which the elements or parts are seen as aspects or phases of a total situation" (1985, p.98). Learning then, results from the coming together of the individual learner, the curriculum and instruction, and the classroom social milieu. The meaning which evolves from the transaction among all these factors is what is learned.

Motivation and attitudes, which are linked to engagement, initiative, and persistence, are seen as critical elements in successful learning (Allen, & Mason,1989; Au, 1991; Dahl & Freppon, 1991; Turner, 1991). Children with a *disposition for learning* (Dahl & Freppon, 1992) have knowledge about reading and writing, specific literacy skills, and positive affective responses such as an interest in accuracy, a sense of self as reader and writer, and persistence. Questions about whether public schooling fosters this *disposition to learn* and the acquisition of *literate behaviors* (Heath, 1986) are critical. Such behaviors are essential to the temperament and mental constitution children need to learn in today's world. Becoming a reader and writer involves cognitive and affective interaction which rely on knowledge acquisition and the development of the will to learn and use written language (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, & Klanusner, 1985). During the early years of schooling, children acquire concepts about written language and a sense of themselves as readers and writers. Clearly, this learning and coming to know the nature of learning itself is important (Downing, 1979; Canney & Winograd, 1979; Freppon, 1991; Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983). In the current study two things were central: (a) understanding school literacy experiences from learners' perspectives, and (b) addressing their knowledge and affective responses in a transitional year to a skills-based curriculum and a continuing year in whole language.

Research confirms differences in the amount and kind of literacy-related activities in conventional, skills-based and whole language classrooms (DeFord, 1984; Durkin, 1978-1979). The theoretical perspective undergirding the whole language curriculum differs significantly from the traditional curriculum (DeFord, 1984; McGee & Richgels, 1990). Some studies document outcomes of the whole-language approach with mainstream children (McIntyre, 1990; Ribowsky, 1986; Vaughan, 1988). Two 1980's studies of young children's writing in whole-language curriculum indicated that this instruction was a pivotal factor in the acquisition of writing skills (DeFord, 1984; Moss, 1983). More recent investigations show more mixed results. For example, Adelman (1992) found no differences in a study of low-SES children in different instructional contexts. In contrast, Freppon's (1991) findings with mainstream populations in contrasting curricula showed that children from whole language classrooms had greater breadth of understanding about the nature and purpose of reading and that they had more strategic reading behaviors. These same children also had knowledge about reading skills such as the role of letter/sound relations in reading that were similar to learners in skills-based curriculum. An investigation on children's composing behaviors and written products (Dahl, Freppon, & McIntyre, 1992) showed that children from whole language curriculum produced more complex writing and engaged in more composing behaviors than children from skills-based curriculum. These findings cut across ability in the whole language group while only the most proficient learners in the skills-based group had comparable composing behaviors and text structures. In contrast, Stahl, Suttles, and Pagnucco (1992) found no differences in children's writing in different curricula, i.e. "process" instruction and traditional instruction, when reading ability was accounted for.

Classic studies in reading instruction (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; DeLawter, 1970; MacKinnon, 1959) and more recent investigations (McIntyre, 1992) contribute to our understanding of the influence of literacy instruction and contexts. Without exception, these investigations call for further study to examine the influence of curriculum on children's literacy learning.

METHOD

Sites

This study involved two second grade classrooms, one skills-based and one whole language, in two midwestern cities. Student populations in the participating schools represented the racial and cultural balance, i.e. African American and white Appalachian, in these urban school communities. Generally, community income was low and mobility rates were high. Socioeconomic status of the children in this second-grade study was determined by demographic information and participation in the federally funded lunch program. Review of school records and home visits during 1989 through 1992 showed no change in the socioeconomic status of these children.

The identification of second grade classrooms was carefully carried out. Teacher interviews (Burke, 1980), classroom observations (Freppon, 1991), DeFord's (1985) Theoretical Orientations to Reading Profile, and administrators' recommendations contributed information. At the beginning of this study, the selected classrooms very closely matched the description of skills-based and whole language curricula described in the theoretical perspectives section. The whole language curriculum, realized in the teacher's philosophy, reading materials, and instructional techniques, remained consistent throughout the entire school year. The skills-based curriculum was consistent in the teacher's philosophy and most teaching techniques throughout the entire school year. However, instructional materials and some instructional techniques were changed after the first semester. These changes included increased opportunities for children to (a) write, (b) read together in flexible ways, and (c) work together on "seatwork" assignments. In February reading materials changed from the basal reader to children's literature and trade books. These changes were a direct consequence of the influence of a new principal.

At the end of the first semester in the skills-based school teachers were asked by the principal to actually make some changes in their teaching. Specifically, she asked teachers to use more children's literature in the classroom, provide more functional or "real" reading and writing activities, and provide more cooperative learning opportunities. Teachers were also asked to talk with each other more about their teaching. These changes began to take place gradually in the second grade classroom and were evident during the second semester. Changes were made at the principal's request and although implemented, the teacher's basic philosophy did not change. This was documented by classroom observations and teacher interviews. Essentially, the skills-based curriculum was consistent throughout the year in its focus on skills, accuracy, task completion, and traditional roles of the teacher and children. It contrasted markedly with the whole language curriculum which viewed literacy learning as a social and evolving process in which approximations to conventional reading and writing and errors were a natural part of successful learning. The roles of the teacher and children in the whole language site, which differed significantly from the skills-based site, remained consistent with the whole language approach. Descriptions of the skills-based classroom and the whole language classroom are in Appendix A.

Informants

The children who participated in this second grade study were those same children randomly selected in 1989 and followed though kindergarten and first grade in whole language classrooms (Dahl & Freppon, 1992). In the current investigation children's knowledge construction was studied through documentation of sense-making patterns revealed by talk and action (Dahl & Freppon, 1992). After two years of whole language curriculum in two different, schools these learners entered second grade. One group of children, the Transition Group, entered a skills-based second grade. The other group of children, the Continuing Group, entered a whole language second grade.

Of the original 24 randomly selected learners, 17 participated in this second grade study due to high mobility in the urban schools. Eight of these children entered the skills-based second grade and nine entered the whole language second grade. Of these 17, four of the original focal children in each site remained. These focal learners were closely observed throughout the school year. The entire group of 17 children participated in pre- and post testing.

Procedures

This second grade study included quantitative and qualitative data collection and procedures. Before pretesting began, the researcher spent time getting to know the teachers and learning classroom routines. Pre- and post tests, using the same instruments and procedures, were administered by the researcher and assistants. Interrater checks were done on all measures except oral reading samples which were analyzed by an outside expert. The researcher also analyzed oral reading samples and any areas of disagreement between the outside expert and the researcher were resolved through repeated review of the data. Qualitative procedures for data gathering included field note taking, video taping, collection of artifacts, and some interviewing. Observations were conducted twice monthly in each classroom.

Because the strength of any ethnographic study involving comparison depends heavily on comparative cultural analysis (Brown, 1990), all data collection and analysis were kept as parallel as possible. Methods and analysis plans were reviewed by a team of four outside consultants for project soundness. A member of this consulting team also reviewed final analysis procedures and tentative findings. These expert reviews were aimed at protecting against bias and strengthening procedures, analysis, and research claims.

Quantitative Assessment Procedures. Pre - and post test assessments included several tasks. These tasks were designed with two goals: (a) to tap various aspects of children's written language knowledge, and (b) to access this information as much as possible from the children's perspective. The instruments used helped capture reading and writing skills, strategies, and concepts, learners' views about themselves and others as readers and writers, and some motivational aspects. Theoretically, these measures were consistent with the rationale that written language knowledge exists as a whole composed of various components (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991) and is influenced by many factors including developmental, instructional, and personal. The discussion which follows provides a description of procedures and analysis for each measure.

Procedures for pre- and post tests took several formats. One standardized measure of reading attitude (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was given to a whole group. The other tasks were administered in individual sessions. Task order was counterbalanced except for orally reading and retelling the stories, which always came first. Four tasks were completed in two separate sessions. One session included oral reading and retelling from a trade book, an assessment of metacognitive knowledge and strategies (Think Along Passage)

(Paris, in press), and a structured writing interview. The other session included oral reading and retelling from a basal text, an assessment of reading schemata (Altered Passages) (Canney & Winograd, 1979), and a structured reading interview. Reading materials were selected according to children's reading levels (based on teacher and researcher judgment). All testing sessions were audiotaped.

Reading Attitude: McKenna and Kear's (1990) Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was administered to the children, in small groups, in each school according to the authors' guidelines. The questions were read to children and children circled the picture that most closely matched their response to each question.

In-process Oral Reading and Retelling: Oral reading samples provided information about children's reading knowledge, skills, and strategies. Story retellings yielded data on reading comprehension and children's effort to make sense of print.

Prior to reading orally, children were given a story introduction that included the title, story characters' names, and scripted information about the story. They were also told that they would be asked to tell about the story after reading. The children then read the story. If children had a problem with an unknown word, they were first encouraged to try to get the word on their own. Then, if help was still needed, the word was given. All oral readings were audiotaped. Analysis of oral reading was done through Clay's (1979) Running Record. Each child did two readings on the pretest and two on the post test. The highest accuracy score was counted and these scores averaged for each group. On the Running Record, easy reading scores are between 95% and 100%, instructional level between 90% and 94%, and difficult below 89%. (differences within each range are considered insignificant) In addition to accuracy rates, the Running Record yields qualitative information. This information includes data on readers' cueing systems (using meaning, syntactic, and graphophonic text cues), orchestration of all cueing systems (achieving a balance), checking and searching for meaning (including self-correction and rereading), predicting and fluency (intonation), and evidence of control over the reading process.

Retellings included an unaided section in which children freely talked about the story and an aided section in which children were asked specific questions based on previous responses. One or more prompts could be given to help children tell all they could. The goal was to tap learners' responses to the text in terms of story understandings and sense-making behaviors. Such behaviors could be seen in informal talk about the story as well as answers to questions. Retelling guidelines were scripted to ensure consistency.

Metacognitive Knowledge and Awareness of Strategies : Paris' (in press) Think Along Passage was used to tap in-process thinking and actions and some motivated behaviors. Comprehension strategies and awareness of strategies are important literacy factors (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkenson, 1985). Although they do not ensure excellence in reading products, thinking skills and motivation to make sense should be evaluated (Valencia & Pearson, 1987). Administration guidelines were followed with texts closely matched to children's developmental levels of learning to read. Behaviors such as scanning the text, looking at the picture, and responses to questions were noted.

Reading Schemata: Canney & Winograd's (1979) Altered Passages were used to assess children's schemata. Five passages contained about three lines of print of which three passages had been altered (i.e word order changed such as, To bus was it Mrs. the go the). One passage included a string of random letters and one was intact. Children were presented the passages of print and told, "*Some people said they can read this and some say they can't - what do you think?*" If the child said the passage could be read, she/he then read it. All responses were recorded and transcribed (see Freppon, 1991).

Interviews: The reading and writing interview instruments in this study drew heavily upon those used in previous research (Freppon,1991; Kraayenoord, Elkins, and Ashman, 1989). These interviews were designed to tap information such as children's knowledge about reading and writing and views about good and poor readers and writers. Interviews were structured and each child was asked the same questions in the same order. Prompts were structured and limited.

In addition to pre- and post interviews, year-end interviews were conducted with focal learners in each classroom. Most questions for these interviews were taken from Allen's (1990) instrument. The children were asked (a) about their favorite subject in school, (b) what they were learning about in reading and writing and how they thought they would learn it, (c) what they would want to read and write when they grew up, and (d) how they felt about school in second grade. Children were interviewed individually and asked the same questions in the same order. Probes were unstructured and interview interactions were as informal as possible.

Qualitative Procedures Documenting Learner Sense Making. Each classroom was observed twice monthly throughout the school year. One focal learner was closely watched each time. This child wore a remote microphone that interfaced with an audiotape recorder so all learner talk could be captured. The activities of the other three focal learners were also monitored. Careful attention was given to talk and action that indicated sense making about reading and writing and learners' perceptions. Field notes were taken and partial transcriptions from the audio recordings included. The product of each observation was an elaborated set of field notes integrated with actual learner talk and thick description of behaviors and context. Each classroom observation session was also video taped. Videos focused on general classroom routines and focal learners. Home visits were conducted for each focal learner at the end of the school year. Parents were asked about their child's second grade year and about literacy activities at home. Copies of focal learners' papers and written artifacts were made. These artifacts were analyzed for evidence of learners' sense making and evolving written language knowledge. In order to keep writing data as parallel as possible, all focal learners' journal writings were collected from September to December. In addition, the teachers in each classroom collected all children's writing done during the month of April. These two collections provided the data base in this report.

The researcher's role was more that of observer than participant in these two classrooms. The goal was to capture what happened as it occurred in daily classroom life with as little interruption as possible. Learners were closely watched and sometimes asked questions such as, "Tell me about that." during reading and writing events.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Scoring procedures on pre- and post test data were carried out in the same way. The sections below provide details on analysis for each measure. Interrater procedures included research assistant training and scoring one-third of randomly selected data. Oral reading samples were not subjected to interratings but were analyzed by an outside expert. The expert also wrote narrative accounts of readers' general strengths and weaknesses, specific strategies, use of cues, and self-monitoring behaviors. This data yielded both quantitative and qualitative information. The outside expert and the researcher discussed results and lastly compared pre-and post test findings on the Transition Group and Continuing Group. Areas of disagreement were resolved by repeated review of the data.

Reading Attitude. Scoring on the Reading Attitude Survey was carried out according to guidelines (McKenna & Kear,1990). Surveys were first marked and scored by a research assistant and checked for accuracy by the researcher.

In-process Reading and Retelling. Oral reading analysis used the Running Record technique (Clay, 1979). Quantitative data included students' reliance on meaning (context and story meaning), structure (syntax), and visual (graphophonic) cues. Qualitative information provided analysis of readers' strategies, such as an active search for meaning, self-monitoring techniques, intonation, and error patterns. Narrative descriptions were written for each reading sample. Analysis by both the outside expert and the researcher resulted in a fine-grained review and provided a more fully developed account of readers' behaviors.

Retellings were analyzed in two ways. First, retellings were read repeatedly and patterns of responses identified and coded. Then a scoring system, based on previous research (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) and the responses of children in this investigation, was devised to rate children's retellings. The goal of this procedure was to gain information about sense making from the children's perspective and to tap their understandings and efforts to make sense of stories. The retold text provided a guide but did not function as a checklist. The nature of the text read, specifics in the retelling, learners' sense-making efforts, and actual understandings were taken into consideration. The scoring system yielded a possible 20 points. In order to allow for appropriate flexibility in scoring, guidelines were written for some stories and for some reading behaviors. For example, if the child did not identify a story problem and there was no obvious problem in the story, a point was awarded in this category. By the same token, if the child failed to identify self-monitoring behaviors (i.e. a reading difficulty), and the story had been read with fluency and accuracy, a point was awarded in this category. Scoring techniques such as these avoided undue penalty and provided appropriate credit. Because there were two pretest retellings and two post test retellings, all four were scored and the highest score in each test counted.

Metacognitive Knowledge and Awareness of Strategies. Paris' (1990) guidelines for scoring the Think Along Passage or TAP were generally followed. Several TAP categories such as identifying the topic and summarizing were used to organize data. Each observed strategy was given one point. Scores ranged from a high of 18 on the pretests to 30 on post tests.

Reading Schemata. Both categorization and a frequency count were involved in analysis of Altered Passage data (Canney & Winograd, 1979). Researcher and assistants' notes about children's responses were written just after the procedure was administered and were taken into account in the analysis. Children's comments were used to identify categories (i.e. " I could read it but the words were all mixed up."). After initial categories were identified, data were collapsed into two final categories of (a) acceptance (the reader gave no sign of schema upset), or (b) rejection (the reader gave some sign of schema upset). Because the children participating in this study differed in development in learning to read, responses of acceptance or rejection were reviewed according to emergent reading abilities (Sulzby, 1985).

Interviews. Pre - and post test reading and writing interviews consisted of 30 questions each. In some areas, such as "characteristic of good readers", multiple questions were asked throughout the interview in order to gather sufficient information. For the purposes of this investigation, a general content analysis was carried out. Data were organized into units through repeated review and information was organized in ways that placed all children's responses to specific questions together, (i.e. all responses to question two were put in one document.) Data were collapsed into five major categories. The categories included information such as (1) view of the nature of reading and writing and the role of prior knowledge, (2) personal variables such as a positive attitude toward reading and writing, reading and writing at home and naming favorite books, (3) the characteristics of good readers and writers and problems and strategies good readers and writers might have, (4) in-process reading and writing behaviors and strategies, and (5) metacognitive knowledge and awareness. These categories were labeled one through five. Repeated review was carried out and grids constructed for data consolidation. After consolidation of categories, during the last phases of analysis, interviews were reviewed for stability or change from pre- to post test for the Transition Group and Continuing Group. Because of the relatively small number of informants, identification of a change within a group from pre- to post test was set at 30% or greater. For example, if 15 % of the children in the Transition Group changed their views on characteristics of good readers; this was not identified as an area of change. Final phases compared the results within and between groups for similarities (stability) or differences (change). During these latter stages, additional reviews of interview data were conducted to screen for spontaneous comments or elaborations and possible differences due to reading ability.

Qualitative Data Analysis.

Qualitative data analysis included elaborated field notes, artifacts, video tapes, teacher and focal children interviews, and home visits. Sense-making patterns were identified though categorization of learner behaviors captured in aggregated, coded field note data. Categories included children's talk and action and the context in which it occurred. Children's patterns of talk and action were taken as sense-making behaviors which evidenced knowledge construction. For purposes of this investigation, categories were culled for established sense-making patterns so that areas of change and stability in the Transition Group and the Continuing Group could be identified. These categories represented children's evolving hypotheses about written language and related factors in reading and writing during second grade. Data narratives and grids were written for each focal learner which summarized these patterns of behaviors and aided in comparison across learners and across time. Grids for each half of the second grade year were aligned and successive reviews carried out. Global hypotheses were written and field note data again reviewed to search for negative cases and to substantiate categories. Video tapes were reviewed to document consistency or lack of consistency in emerging sense-making patterns. This additional data review was done though repeated viewing and provided further substantiation.

Teacher interviews were conducted in December, March, and May of the school year. In these interviews teachers were asked (a) about the focal learners and how they were doing, (b) which children they were most worried about, why they were concerned, and what they intended to do, and (c) which children they were least worried about and why. The focal children were asked questions in an end-of-year interview. Questions asked about (a) a favorite school subject, (b) learning about reading and writing, and (c) functions of reading and writing in later life. Finally, home visits provided information on parents' interpretations of children's second-grade experiences and reading and writing activities children did at home. All interview information was analyzed by repeated review of the data and organization into categories though content analysis.

Qualitative findings presented in this report represent prominent sense-making patterns of focal children in two different second grade curricula. These sense-making patterns were linked to patterns identified in the previous two years of schooling (Dahl & Freppon, 1992).

Two collections of six focal children's writing were analyzed. In each classroom, the writings of a most experienced learner, considered to be a "top" student, and two less experienced students, considered to be at least "average" in ability were examined. Similarity of reading abilities in these six children was verified through teacher judgment, researcher knowledge, and standardized test scores. One focal learner who was frequently absent and one who was not yet reading conventionally were excluded in this analysis in order to keep the data parallel.

Writing analysis was conducted through repeated review of written artifacts in a search for patterns. Identification of categories was generated from this process and data were aggregated. Grids for each curricula by focal learner were constructed. These grids provided the means to analyze by curricula, by time, and by children's reading ability. Analysis yielded categories of (a) text structures and incidence of drawing to elaborate meanings, and (b) use of written language features including text-like phrases, dialogue, descriptive words, words in series or repetition for literary emphasis, poetic language, and titles and formulaic endings. Incidence of revisions such as erasures or marking out and rewriting were also coded.

In this analysis, Newkirk's (1989) work on children's writing and Purcell-Gates' (1988) research on lexical and syntactic knowledge of written narrative held by young children were of great value. Some terms from both Newkirk and Purcell-Gates were used in labeling. The description below outlines the two main categories.

Category Name: Text Structures

Drawings	Drawing adds to or elaborates meaning
Narrative-like List	Writing has both narrative and list-like qualities, i.e. I like pizza, I like tacos,
Narrative Prose	Writing is focused on a category or topic such as family and consists of an assertion and related sentence or clause, i.e. My brother is fun. He always plays with me. We go to the.... .
Letter or Card	Writing is organized in letter, card or other formalized structure, i.e. Dear Santa.....
Declarative Statement	Writing is structured of one or more declarative statements, i.e. You are a good baseball player.
Initial Paragraphs	Clusters of sentences or clauses including at least three that are related.
Story-like	Writing is organized in story form, i.e. it has episodic structure, but is also transitional and combines, for example, story features such as title with elaborated narrative-like lists and a sequence of events
Story	Writing is structured in story form with several other story features prominent such as sequence of events, characters, evidence of plot including problem/solution or some conflict or theme
Genre	Writing is organized in story or poetic form and has non-fiction qualities. i.e. information text, riddles, poetry.

Category Name: Written Language Features

Literary-like or Text-like Words or Phrases	" I have the key that opens the door to the future."
Dialogue	She said, " Who are you?"
Descriptive Words and Words in Series, Repetition and /or Poetic Language	" It was a danger house." " ....and it grew.....and grew."
Titles and Formalized	" Jumping Rope"
Beginnings & Endings.	" The End " , "Once upon a time"

A content analysis was carried out on the written artifacts and identification of text structures made according to the most salient features of the writing. For example, "Willie is strong" was categorized as a declarative statement. Written artifacts were also reviewed for evidence of written language features. For each written artifact only one occurrence of text-like words or phrases was counted. In a like manner, one use of descriptive language or repetition, one use of dialogue, and one occurrence of title or formalized ending was counted for each piece of writing. For example, in a three page piece of fictional writing the first occurrence of text-like words and phrases " Then I began to cry." was counted. Subsequent use of other text-like phrases were not counted.

RESULTS

The goal of this study was to investigate the second-grade experience of two groups of children who went to whole language kindergartens and first grades. In second grade the Transition Group moved to a skills-based classroom and the Continuing Group stayed in whole language. Children's reading ability at the beginning of this second-grade study spanned the developmental range described by Sulzby (1985). Reading behaviors ranged from pre-conventional to conventional and fluent.

The results of this study documented that all participating second-grade children made progress in literacy learning in both curricula. All children in both groups became better readers, however, only the Continuing Group showed progress in both reading and writing. The results section is organized into three parts: (a) standardized tests and pre- and post test results, (b) qualitative results, and (c) an in-depth synthesis of information on each focal learner.

Standardized tests

On normed measures of reading, results indicate little difference between the Transition Group and Continuing Group. Although test scores were not available as a pretest measure, standardized tests were taken in the spring of second grade and the results for both groups were similar. The average normal curve equivalent total reading score was 38.2 for the entire class in the skills-based curriculum, 46.0 for children participating in pre- and post tests, and 58.0 for focal children in this study. In the whole language curriculum, the average normal curve equivalent total reading score was 44.7 for the entire class, 42.0

for the children participating in pre- and post tests, and 53.0 for focal children in this study.

Pre- and post test results

Quantitative measures used at the beginning and end of second grade were designed to tap written language concepts, strategies, attitudes, and specific skills.

Reading attitudes. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) pretest average percentile was 51st for the Transition Group and 94th for the Continuing Group. Average post test results for the Transition Group placed them in the 29th percentile with the Continuing Group in the 26th. Pretest and post test average scores, in the two subcategories of recreational and academic reading, were similar for both groups. These results indicate that the Transition Group had lower pretest scores and that post test scores did not decline. Outcomes also show that the Continuing Group had higher pretest scores and that post test scores declined.

Oral readings. Both groups of children varied in their development in learning to read at the beginning of second grade. Pre- and post test findings were derived from the Running Record analysis (Clay, 1979). The Transitional Group gained an average of 3% and the Continuing Group gained an average of 6% in oral reading accuracy. Pretest scores show that the Transition Group began second grade with higher accuracy scores (Transition Group 92%; Continuing Group, 84%). The two groups ended second grade differently as shown on the Running Record analysis with the Continuing Group having a slightly greater gain in accurate reading. The Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference ($p < .33$) between the two groups.

Retellings. Results show that the Transition Group had an average pretest score of 11.9. On post test outcomes on this measure were 12.3 indicating a gain of .04. The Continuing Group had an average pretest score of 12.5 and a post test score of 15.4 indicating a gain of 2.9 points. Interrater agreement on the retelling measure was 90%. The Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference ($p < .17$) between the two groups.

Metacognitive knowledge and awareness of strategies. The findings from the Think Along Passages (Paris, in press) for the Transition Group averaged at 15.3 points on pretests and 14 points on post tests showing a loss of 1.3 points on metacognitive strategies and awareness. The average pretest score for the Continuing Group was 17.9 with a post test average of 20.4

showing a gain of 3.4 points on this measure. Interrater agreement was 89%. The Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference ($p < .73$) between the two groups.

Reading schemata. This procedure is generally used to assess reading concepts by measuring the degree to which children's schemata is upset by passages of print that do not make sense. Children's responses showing no evidence of any upset by the altered text were labeled acceptance. Responses labeled rejection showed some kind of schemata upset. Passages of print were altered differently so that some were more incomprehensible than others.

Findings on children's concepts about reading showed greater variability within these two groups of children than between groups. However, there was a slight trend in the Transition Group toward a focus on "word getting." The following table delineates the results. General levels of development in learning to read are provided in the pretest column. Post test information assumes the progress made in reading by all children.

Table 1

Pre and Post Test Results on Children's Rejection and Acceptance of Passages of Incomprehensible Print in the Transition Group and Continuing Group.

Transition Group		Continuing Group	
pretest	post test	pretest	post test
Kyle, Brandon, & Tom: conventional readers showing some rejection	Kyle, Brandon & Tom: acceptance and focus on words	Luwanda & Maury: pre-conventional readers & showing no focus on print & acceptance	Luwanda & Maury: showing some acceptance & some rejection
Ann: conventional reader showing some rejection	Ann: clear rejection	Rashad & Mariah: borderline conventional readers showing some rejection	Rashad & Mariah clear rejection
Carlie: conventional, fluent reader showing acceptance	Carlie: acceptance & focus on words	Adam: borderline conventional reader acceptance	Adam: acceptance & focus on words
Rose, Charlie, & Jason: conventional, fluent readers - clear rejection	Rose, Charlie, & Jason: clear rejection	Karen, Schameka, Isaac, & Willie: conventional, fluent readers - clear rejection	Karen, Schameka, Isaac, & Willie: clear rejection

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* rejection: child indicates schema about reading is upset by rejecting print in some way or otherwise showing that he/she understands the print did not make sense

* acceptance: child does not indicate any upset of schema (this response is often accompanied by a clear focus on getting the words right in a passage of incomprehensible print)

As the information in the table indicates, individual levels of development in learning to read influence children's responses when they are presented with print that did not make sense. For example, children who were not yet conventional readers did not consistently reject altered passages. This result is consistent with other research (Canney & Winograd 1979). Findings also indicated that instruction had some effect on the children's schemata about reading. This result was also found in another investigation (Freppon, 1991).

With the exception of one case, conventional, fluent readers in both groups clearly rejected passages of incomprehensible print on both pre- and post tests. In contrast, children who were just learning to read conventionally accepted passages of print that did not make sense on pretests. These same children showed mixed responses on the post test (when they had learned more about reading). For example, Luwanda, reading at the picture-governed phase (Sulzby, 1985) on the pretest, read by inventing a story-like text while shifting her gaze away from the print. On the post test, she focused strongly on the print- - read words she knew and rejected some passages of print that did not make sense while accepting others. In the Transition Group, evidence of the influence of instruction was most apparent in three conventional readers, Kyle, Brandon, and Tom. Post test responses showed a tendency to accept print that did not make sense and a focus on word getting in spite of mature reading ability. The interrater check showed 93% agreement.

Reading interviews. Generally, test results evidenced stability within the Transition Group. However, there were two areas of decrease and one which increased. One 37% decrease was in *the view of reading* category. On the post test, the Transition Group named fewer reading events beyond "things for school" than named on pretests. For example, they discussed the writing on the board as something that could be read, but they did not talk about their own writing. Another category, *making inferences while reading*, showed a 33% decrease on the post test. For example, responses that identified making up parts of a story to support understanding was higher at the beginning of second grade. The Transition Group increase was in discussion of sounding out words as a primary reading strategy. Frequency of talk about this strategy increased 35% from pre- to post test.

The Continuing Group's reading interview results also indicated a good deal of stability. One area of change was an increase, of 33%, in talk about reading events beyond the classroom. For example, responses included more discussion of items not exclusively school connected such as print in the community. In addition, post test results showed they talked more about their own writing. There was no decrease in this group in any area on the reading interviews. For example, on pretests they said good readers read a lot and used a variety of clues to help them make sense. Post test results where highly similar in frequency and the nature of talk about these factors.

As noted above, reading interview findings on both groups were marked more by stability than change. Pre- to post test responses documented that children in both curricula said they liked to read, read at home, and named favorite books. Children also noted that reading a lot was important to improvement in reading and identified that understanding the story was as important or more important than getting words. The most prevalent reading strategies both groups discussed included asking for help and sounding out words.

Between group differences were evident in two ways. One has been described above, and another was captured in spontaneous talk throughout the interviews. On pretest interviews, 50% of the children in the Transition Group integrated talk that linked reading and writing. For example, they noted that good readers read and wrote a lot or that a reader might have problems if she/he didn't both read and write. Post test outcomes showed a decrease (25%) in this kind of spontaneous talk. Moreover, for children who did talk about the reading/writing link on post tests, it was mentioned only once. In contrast, there was an increase in spontaneous talk that linked reading and writing (from 55% to 77%) in the Continuing Group. For these children the reading/ writing link was discussed at least twice or as many as four different times. Interrater agreement on the reading interviews was 93%.

Writing interviews. Post test outcomes on the Transition Group indicated a change of 30% or greater on several factors within the main categories. The Transition Group showed a decrease in positive responses when asked if there were things they liked about writing. There was also a decrease in affirmations of themselves as good writers. For example, at the beginning of second grade, 66% of the children said *yes* to being a good writer. Post test results showed 25% responded *yes*. Fifty percent of the Transition Group expressed doubt about being good writers by the end of second grade. These children cited spelling, "messing up", and handwriting as reasons for doubt. Two other decreases in this group emerged in the in-process writing and strategies category and one in the metacognitive category. From pre- to post test, fewer children (38%) named a favorite kind of writing and said they thought of related pictures when they wrote. There was a decrease in the variety of strategies children named for word getting with 88% naming only "asking for help" as a writing strategy. Also, fewer children said they imagined themselves in stories or wrote better if they were in stories (from 88% on pretest to 38% on post test).

Three increases evident in the Transition Group involved personal variables and metacognitive factors. Post test results showed an increase (38%) in children's preference for writing with friends rather than alone. There was also an increase (32%) in responses confirming that writing was hard for them. Most children cited spelling hard words, cursive handwriting, or getting bad grades in their discussions about why writing was hard.

The Continuing Group's pre- to post test writing interview results were generally stable. However, there were two areas showing an increase, one in their view of the nature of writing itself and one in actual writing behaviors and strategies. Seventy-seven percent of these learners cited the story itself (rather than surface features such as handwriting) as most important in writing on pretests. On post tests, 77% discussed both the story itself and handwriting or spelling as most important (22% cited the story only). Post test results showed that 33% more children in the Continuing Group went back to their writing and worked out problems.

Between group comparison showed similarities in several areas. Nearly all children in both groups showed that they knew about the role of prior knowledge in writing, understood the characteristics of good writers, and cited many of the same understandings involving writing strategies such as sounding out words. Both groups expressed awareness of the connections between reading and writing when asked directly about this link. For example, there was nearly 100% similarity of responses on questions that asked if good writers needed to know how to read and whether writing could help a person learn to read better. Interrater agreement on the writing interviews was 96%.

Year-end interviews with focal children. In May of the school year the focal children in each classroom were asked about favorite school work, what they were learning in reading and writing and how they were learning it, and what they would need or like to read and write when they grew up. Interview results indicated similarities between the two groups. The Transition Group and the Continuing Group discussed functional reading and writing they would need or want to do when they grew up. For example, all the focal children talked about things such as reading bills and letters. In like manner, children in both groups said words were important in learning to read and write. However, the Transition Group focused more exclusively on words when they talked about what they were learning in reading. For example, they said they were learning big words, hard words, and, with hands outstretched to show great size, " words about this big! "

Contrasts between the two groups were evident in several areas. Three of the four children in the Transition Group named math as the favorite subject and one named writing. Two children mentioned persistence or trying as important in learning. All four discussed cursive handwriting in response to telling what they were learning about writing. Only one of these children, the most able student, responded in a way that indicated a personal connection as a writer.

In the Continuing Group, all four focal learners named reading or writing, and two also included math, as their favorite school subjects. All children indicated a personal connection as a writer. For example, " I'm learning I'm good at it (writing)". They also talked about the importance of persistence, and all responses linked reading and writing in literacy learning. Finally, focal children in the Continuing Group discussed reading and/or writing in the content area. For example, they discussed science projects and science books. None of the focal children in the Transition Group discussed reading or writing in the content area.

Summary: The quantitative results indicated similarities and differences between the Transition and Continuing Groups. Results on standardized tests, year-end interviews, and reading attitudes, as measured by the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, call for the following clarifications. Findings on other measures (except for Reading Schemata presented in Table 1) are summarized in the table below.

Standardized test outcomes showed that both groups' scores fell within one standard deviation of the mean. Neither a transition to a skills-based curriculum nor continuance in whole language appeared to have a significant effect on the reading skills tapped by normed measures.

Year-end interviews showed similarities in the ways both groups of children thought about reading and writing when they grew up. The groups differed primarily in expression of positive attitudes about themselves as writers and in breadth of understanding. The Continuing Group showing more positive attitudes and more breadth. A decline in positive responses was documented in the Transition Group.

Outcomes on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey were inconsistent with all other results in this study. This finding is perplexing since the preponderance of evidence (on multiple measures) revealed consistently contrasting results. In the researcher's judgment, either this instrument was not appropriate for children of this young age or there were flaws in the testing procedures.

The following table presents a summary of the between-group results on oral reading, retellings, metacognitive and strategic knowledge, reading interviews, and writing interviews.

Table 2

Between Group Results on Oral Reading, Retellings, Metacognitive and Strategic Knowledge, Reading Interviews, and Writing Interviews .

	Transition Group pre- to post test changes	Continuing Group pre-to post test changes
Oral reading accuracy:	3%	6%
Retellings:	.04 points	2.9 points
Metacognitive and strategic knowledge:	-1.3 points	3.4 points
Reading interviews:	37% less identification of items to be read beyond school	33% more identification of items to be read beyond school
	33% less identification of inference making while reading	stability in identification of inference making while reading
	stability in other categories	stability in other categories
Writing interviews	30% or greater decrease in responses indicating positive attitudes toward writing	stability in responses indicating positive attitudes toward writing were maintained
	30% decrease in responses reflecting metacognitive or strategic knowledge	30% or greater increase in responses reflecting metacognitive or strategic knowledge
	38% increase in preference for writing with others	stability in preference for writing with others
	32% increase in statements that writing was difficult	no increase in statements that writing was difficult
	stability in citing the story and surface features as important in writing	30% or greater increase in citing the story and surface features as important in writing
	stability in other categories	stability in other categories

Although the pre- to post test findings did not yield statistically significant results, the summarized results in the table above show a consistent pattern of more positive outcomes for the Continuing group across measures.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative findings, on eight focal learners, were drawn from observational data in both second grades throughout the school year. This information documented learners' perspectives as they experienced a transition to a skills-based curriculum and as they continued in whole language. Results show both change and stability in sense-making patterns in the Transition Group and in the Continuing Group. Patterns provide information about focal children's interpretations of instruction as they went about their daily lives in two different second-grade curricula. Learners' talk and action over time were taken as evidence of sense making. The findings presented in this section were linked to patterns of sense making established by the end of first grade (Dahl & Freppon, 1992).

Entering knowledge, concepts, and attitudes about reading, writing, and learning. Isaac, Maury, Schemeka, and Willie (the Transition Group) and Charlie, Ann, Carlie, and Jason (the Continuing Group) began second grade well motivated to read, write, and "do school." Although individual development in literacy learning varied, by the end of first grade, engagement with reading and writing was robust. This pattern cut across classroom contexts in both whole language first grades. Learners' engagement was evident in several sense-making patterns including sense of self as reader and writer and persistence in written language interactions, responses to literature, and an interest in accuracy. After two years of whole language curriculum these children entered second grade with established knowledge, attitudes, and concepts about reading, writing, and about themselves. This constellation of sense-making behaviors was documented as a *disposition for learning* in Dahl & Freppon, 1992.

The following sections present findings on three sense-making patterns. These are: (a) a sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence in written language interactions, (b) response to literature, and (c) accuracy. Discussion of these patterns is followed by the qualitative findings on oral reading samples and year-end interviews with the children.

Background information: Sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence : This sense making pattern captured children's perceptions of what they could and would do in reading and writing. In first grade, in two different urban classrooms, the participating children demonstrated knowledge of themselves as literate individuals who persisted in self-selected written language interactions. Their general response to reading and writing was to take on the task. They participated in teacher-guided lessons, worked with other children, and took initiative to read and write on their own. A few learners, particularly those for whom literacy learning was more difficult, periodically engaged in some avoidance behaviors in writing. Importantly, with support from peers or the teacher these children were consistently as eager to write as their more proficient peers.

Like all children, there were times in kindergarten and first grade when individuals experienced "a bad day" or showed less than desirable enthusiasm for doing their work. Interestingly, even in these cases focal children continued to choose literacy independently albeit with less frequency. For example, if a child avoided writing during the writing workshop period, it was also the case that the same child selected and interacted with books and participated in other independent, peer involved, and teacher-guided literacy activities.

The transition group's change and stability in sense of self as a reader and writer, and persistence. The behaviors of all the children in the Transition Group were marked by a general decline in this sense-making pattern. In particular, there was a decrease in learner talk and action demonstrating this pattern in independent contexts. Substantiation of a sense of self as a reader and writer was found in only the most proficient learner in the Transition Group. The children focused predominantly on assigned tasks rather than what they could or would do in reading or writing. The samples below are representative of their perceptions.

- " I'm done, now I'm on my second one."
- " Where we suppose to write this at? "
- " I ain't missed none, how many you got?"
- " I'm on English, you only suppose to write one verse."

As noted above, of the focal learners, only the most proficient child evidenced a sense of self as a reader and writer. Moreover, for this learner, there was a decrease in the frequency of data demonstrating this pattern and nearly no evidence of choosing to read or write on his own. Another child, considered to be "below average" in ability and an eager "teacher pleaser" did not engage in behaviors documenting a sense of self as a reader and writer nor in patterns of persistence in self-selected reading or writing. Classroom observations in second grade showed one instance in which each of these two children chose to read or write on his/her own. Both of these children, however, engaged sufficiently to accomplish reading and writing tasks assigned to them by their teacher. They worked diligently alone at their desks and made the transition to a skills-based curriculum with little difficulty. However, this was not the case for two other focal children.

Within the first weeks of schooling a rather dramatic change was evident in two learners in the Transition Group. These children, considered to be "average" or "above average " in reading ability exhibited passive behaviors in contexts in which they worked alone and in whole group instruction. Patterns of disengagement with classroom reading and writing events were marked behaviors such as sitting staring into space, watching others, or playing with lunch money. The following examples are representative of this pattern.

Jason:

10: 00 a.m.

> Jason watches the reading group, puts a heading on his cursive writing paper (writes the word Cursive, the date, and his name). He gets up from his seat, gets an eraser from the teacher's desk, erases several letters, rewrites the letters, and puts the eraser back on the teacher's desk. Jason sits down and watches another boy, looks at the board, looks at the front of a book sitting just in front of him on the chalk board, stands up and looks again, sits down and watches reading group. He picks up a bit paper off the floor, looks at it and at his fingers - -rolls the paper on his desk. Jason looks down at the cursive writing paper and begins to write.

10:28 a.m

> Jason looks around the room and stares into space -- he has one line of Ws, in capital letters on his paper.

Carlie:

9 a.m

> The teacher explains the board work assignments to the class. Carlie sits quietly, stares straight ahead or glances at others from time to time throughout this event. She does not raise her hand, comment, or look at related books or papers on her desk. Carlie twists her hair around her finger.

9: 37 a.m.

> Carlie starts to cut out objects on a cut and paste worksheet.

9: 55 a.m.

> Carlie works on same cut and paste worksheet.

A mid-year interview about all four focal learners documented the teacher's concerns about these two children. Teacher concern were focused on the lack of motivation, and Carlie's excessive absence from school. The interview showed that Jason and Carlie's problems were not related to academic ability but to their lack of engagement with school work.

However, all through the school year these two children's level of engagement differed when in close contact with their teacher and or peers. For example, in reading group they generally responded actively by watching for their turn, reading fluently, providing unknown words to peers, and engaging in saying words in flash card drill. They joined others in a child invented competitive game in the flash card activity and regularly earned stickers for correct responses. Their reading was accurate and responses to teacher questions indicated good reading comprehension. However, when they returned to their seats they assumed the same passive stance captured in the samples above.

These two learners began to participate more actively as the skills-based curriculum incorporated trade books for reading materials, opportunities to read and work collaboratively, and more writing activities. By spring of the second grade year, a positive change nearly as dramatic as the previous one, was clear. Both children engaged in completing their work with diligence when they worked with other children. In addition, Carlie responded with increased engagement in working alone at her desk. At the end of the year, Jason also worked much more successfully in this independent context. An end-of-year teacher interview supported these findings and showed that the teacher was relieved and pleased at the "turn around" in these children. Importantly, however, no act of choosing to read or write on their own was observed in these two children during the school year. Moreover, their talk and action demonstrating a sense of self as a reader and writer did not return in the skills-based curriculum.

The change in this classroom, i.e. use of trade books and more flexible reading contexts, more writing, and collaborative work, was positive for all children in the Transition Group. Following these changes even learners who had not experienced dramatic difficulties appeared more relaxed and happy. For example, there was a decrease in expressions of anxiety about getting their work done. Mid and end-of-year teacher interview information supported these findings. The teacher noted that she did not worry about either student.

The Continuing Group's change and stability in sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence Analysis of children's talk and action in the Continuing Group documented patterns of sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence highly similar to first grade. This finding was evident across contexts and was independent of differences in academic proficiency. This pattern captured children's perceptions of what they could and would do in reading and writing and was evident in learners considered to be "high" and "average" in academic achievement and the one student who struggled in learning to read and write. The following samples of learner talk and action were drawn from classroom observation data that occurred in various contexts. These Continuing Group samples are representative of the children's sense of self as reader/writer and persistence.

- " I'm just reading the chapter."
- " I'll be reading this other one soon as I can find it."
- " Want me to read that one to you!?"
- " I know what I'm gonna do!" (uttered immediately before a reading and writing event and followed by intense engagement)
- " I want to read this book again!"

Analysis of reading and writing events indicated that although this pattern was evident in reading, it was even more prevalent in writing. The following representative samples show the nature of the children's writing behaviors.

- " Make that (book cover) so I can get done, I want to write a pop-up book."
- " I'm writing about sharks now."
- " Now I be over there to help you (write)... we got 26 pages in one of our stories."
- "It's gonna be a very, very, real good story. Mrs. L. says I got a good beginning- - now I got to finish it."
- " We can write about houses and going into houses."

Field notes and writing artifacts showed focal learners consistently engaged in writing. They worked on stories over time, often for several days, and exhibited a vested, personal interest in their writing. Individual preferences for collaboration and teacher help were evident in two students, one of whom was quite academically able. This child sometimes engaged in organizing writing events in which he did a good deal of illustrating. However, he also wrote on his own regularly. Behaviors showing a high need for support were evident in the less able learner. For example, he sometimes rocked back and forth repeating " I need help, I need help " until a peer or his teacher worked with him. As the year progressed this child wrote more often on his own after such assistance. Even very brief teacher or peer help seemed to provide what he needed to take on the task of writing more independently. Importantly, his behaviors did not evidence passivity or disengagement but rather active engagement in getting the help he needed to write.

Patterns of persistence, related to sense of self, are evident in the samples shown above, the amount of reading and writing children did, and patterns of choosing to engage in literacy events. Individual preferences, i.e. children's stance toward learning in school were also evident. For example, one focal learner nearly always read alone while another sought collaborative reading about half the time. The common factor was that all focal learners did independent reading and writing. For example, they read daily for extended periods, searched for specific books, invited others to read with them, and asked to read to peers and adults. Interestingly, these children appeared to set up their own supportive contexts. For example, they sometimes got one or more books and found "private places" in which to read. Several of these learners set up a routine of "round robin" reading and invited the teacher to join them. Across contexts, as the following samples show, they talked about stories and characters, and behaved in ways that showed rather intense engagement.

> Isaac entered the classroom, hung up his coat, walked to the center of the group area and picked up a new Christmas book, sat down, and read it through. As he turned the pages he uttered, "Wow!" - " Check it out !" He then picked up another holiday book and began reading it to a boy sitting beside him. In this event he quickly invited his peer to take turns reading together. After this reading he took up another holiday book and began to read, but stopped after several children interrupted him. Later that morning after reading with the teacher Isaac returned to this same book and read it through.

Willie arrived late and upon entering the classroom wore a deep frown. He was unusually quiet during a storybook reading and sat with his chin in his hand. He did not interact with peers and made fewer comments on the story than usual. After the story, as the children dispersed around the room for reading time, he walked around the book area looking dejected for about five minutes before announcing, "I don't want to read." He then turned and watched several girls reading and writing with some new teacher-made response sheets. After speaking briefly with the girls, he and another boy went rapidly to their cubbies and got writing journals and several story response sheets. Willie said, " Here I'll show you - - here let's get the pink ones." Sitting down on the couch he then read two books, responded in writing to each, and discussed how to spell words with others. "Hey Tommy, ain't funny -- F U N N Y?" " Ain't it F U N N and Y." He then put his writing materials away and used the tape recorder to listen to a fairy tale story by himself. As he followed along, he tracked the print visually and sometimes with his finger, glanced at pictures after the text was read, and looked back at one or two pages as if to check his place.

Mid - and end-of-year interviews with the teacher supported findings on sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence. She was well satisfied with the children's motivation to read and write and thought that they had a good sense of where they were in their own learning. This teacher was also concerned about the one focal learner who still struggled in learning to read and write. She noted this learner was gaining in independence and skills but that his progress was slow. She talked about plans for supporting his learning, and she expressed hope that all the children would continue to persist in reading and writing in third grade.

Background information: Response to literature: Both groups of children entered second grade with clear responses to literature. Established sense making behaviors showed knowledge, concepts, and attitudes about story book language, intertextual knowledge, and acquisition of a critical stance about literature. For example, they used written language features in their writing such as text-like phrases and formulaic endings. They related one story to another in their talk and used familiar stories to structure their own story writing. These children, having experienced whole language curriculum in the first two years of schooling, entered second grade with a critical stance toward literature.

In this investigation the amount and nature of storybook readings varied in the two second grade curricula. Nevertheless, it was clear that both groups of children very much enjoyed storybook readings. For example, learners settled down in quiet excitement when their teachers prepared to read and listened closely with obvious pleasure.

In the skills-based curriculum reading aloud was not done on a routine basis. Most often children responded verbally only when called on. For example, when the teacher read Frosty the Snowman and asked at the end of the story "Where did Frosty go?" Charlie responded, as he held up his hand and the teacher nodded to him, "Out in the air." In contrast, in the whole language curriculum the teacher read aloud several times each day and the children were expected to interact verbally with the story during the reading. The discussion below delineates patterns of changes and stability in both the Transition and Continuing Group.

The Transition Group's change and stability in response to literature. There was change in this sense making pattern. No behaviors demonstrating a critical response to literature or intertextual knowledge expressed during storybook readings were captured in regular classroom observations. However, responses relating to reading comprehension factors such as seeking clarity, monitoring, and predicting were demonstrated when children responded to storybook readings.

- " The cat has a bell?"
- " Bird is looking for lunch too."
- " Cat, Cat." (predicts next character in the story)
- " As he runs you can hear and find him."
- " What is it right there?"

These kinds of responses showed children's monitoring of story meaning, specific events, and character actions. Such behaviors were typical, though scant in quantity, of the kinds of sense making children did during storybook readings in the skills-based curriculum. Most of these verbal responses were uttered by the most proficient learners.

Some evidence of stability was found in expressions of understanding the language of storybooks. This pattern was not robust, however, and occurred primarily in writings of only the most proficient focal learner.

Differences in writing opportunities in the skills-based curriculum and the routine of assigned topics and specific directions (i.e. write eight sentences) seemed to have a limiting effect. Writing that reflected knowledge of storybook language occurred later in the year when the writing activities were more flexible. For example, the sample below was written when children were given old keys and told to write a story about them.

A Magic Key

> Once upon a time there was a key. The key opened a treasure box. The treasure box had gold and money in it. This man came and grabbed it. The boys said come back here. The police caught the man. The man gave money back. The boy is happy and rich.

The Continuing Group's change and stability in response to literature. Analysis indicated patterns of change and stability in this sense-making pattern. The changes evident in the Continuing Group seemed linked to a global change in the teacher's storybook routines and children's development in learning to read. For example, this whole language, second-grade teacher seemed less focused on actually teaching children to read through responses to literature. This was a significant change from first-grade storybook readings. In first grade, children were expected to read along in big book interactions and to participate in a near constant stream of talk with the teacher and even with the text itself. Reanalysis of first-grade storybook interactions suggested that the children's verbalizations of their thinking, or regulatory metacognition, was "brought out" by the role literature played in first grade. This role was realized in specific kinds of texts (big books and large, interactive charts) and an instructional emphasis on teaching children to read.

In contrast, second grade story reading time was often quiet with the children indicating by gesture and body language that they were engrossed in the story. This "active silence" seemed to mark internalization of metacognitive speech in these children. This is consistent theoretically with the fact that as literacy concepts and skills become more automatic they also become less visible (see Cox,1992, for discussion). All the children enjoyed storybook readings as much as ever. For example, it was not unusual for them to ask the teacher to read more and they frequently applauded at the end of stories. But they appeared more mature and settled, and their verbal responses were more subtle.

In storybook reading interactions the Continuing Group demonstrated stability in patterns of intertextural ties, a critical stance toward literature, and knowledge of the language of storybooks. This latter pattern was particularly evident in children's writings and was present across levels of ability (except in the case of one child who was not yet reading conventionally). The following samples are representative of patterns demonstrating knowledge, concepts and attitudes about intertextual ties, and critical analysis. Samples also show reading comprehension behaviors (monitoring, clarifying, questioning, and predicting) very similar to those of the Transition Group.

- " Yea, we know that's how the planets turn and the sun shines. It says it in that one (another book). "
- " Yea, (it's) like Little House on the Prairie, they make up their own ways."
- " I wonder how she could have remembered all that -- it was such a long time ago."
- " Yea, that's how my grandmother does it!"
- " They will probably take a train, or maybe airplane."
- " Oh, we heard that before!"

Results on knowledge construction in learning the language of story books showed a robust sense-making pattern in the Continuing Group. This pattern was most evident in written artifacts as this sample shows.

> On The Riverbank
>
> Once there was a boy who lived by the sea. He liked to play by the botehouse that allways was by his house. his parents told him it was to dangerous. One day wien nobody was looking he ran into the bouthouse. When his dad joey, came home he said Max, Max, Max, where are you. But Max did not come. his dad went looking for him but he came bake with nothing in his hand.

Background information: An interest in accuracy: Both groups of children entered second grade with well established interests in accuracy. After two years of whole language curriculum, these students demonstrated a desire to achieve accuracy shown in behaviors such as revision in writing, using texts to find correct spellings, and self-correction and rereading.

The Transition Group's change and stability on interest in accuracy. Analysis of these focal children's behaviors over the course of the second-grade year revealed no change in their interest in accuracy. Their behaviors consistently marked a stable and deep interest in doing school work well. Interestingly, this was true even in the two students who experienced the period of disengagement and passivity in the first semester. These learners exhibited genuine efforts in teacher-guided contexts and later in the school year in peer-involved contexts. They self-corrected, corrected others, and worked hard at getting their reading and related tasks such as flash card practice right. Clearly, these children produced little work on their own prior to being given opportunities to collaborate. However, on the occasion when they did engage, behaviors showed real interest in achieving accuracy. For example, they erased and re-wrote, asked others how to spell words, and went to the teacher to get clarification and directions.

Generally, all the participating children in the Transition Group continued to show a keen interest in accuracy as these representative comments show.

- " Is this word spelled right?"
- " Ah, what is this word."
- " Ops, I didn't read this part."
- " Let's see if I can find the word." (looks through text)

The Continuing Group's change and stability on interest in accuracy. Results on this sense-making pattern were stable and highly similar to the children in the skills-based curriculum. Analysis showed strong interest in achieving accuracy with written language. This was revealed consistently in learner talk and actions in classroom observations. Teacher interviews also supported this finding. For example the teacher noted, " They are really into mechanics" as she discussed classroom interactions which were prompted by a child's question about vowels. Subsequent to this event, class talk revolved around the role of vowels in spelling and the teacher began a series of mini-lessons. As she explained, " I had to go back and rewrite my lesson plan! They really wanted to talk about it." Instruction in this classroom showed acceptance of errors and child-like approximations to conventional reading and writing. Although the teacher did not stress accuracy the children consistently demonstrated great interest in "getting it right."

- " Oh, I got gog for got! "
- " How do you spell dear?"
- " I try and try and try but I keep on messing up on it."

- " Ah, that doesn't make sense."
- " Let's turn it into a book of stories." (after a writing error was discovered)

Background information: Learning to read: Both groups of children evidenced a range of learning-to-read behaviors in the two previous years. At the beginning of second grade, some children in the Transition Group were well established conventional readers while others were emerging conventional readers. In the Continuing Group there were some who were not yet reading consistently in print-governed ways (Sulzby, 1985), emerging conventional readers, and well established conventional readers.

The Transition Group's qualitative oral reading results. Running Record findings showed reading growth in all children in this group. On pretests learners in the Transitional Group generally fell into two groups. Several children read with effective strategies and some fluency. These learners integrated cues most of the time, read "chunks" of text, evidenced control of the language of books, and reread and self-corrected. Others in the Transition Group showed less effective strategy use and some disfluency. For example, they overrelied on graphophonic cues or could not yet use this cueing system efficiently. These children also tended to read word by word.

Post test findings on oral reading in the Transitional Group indicated that children who began second grade as strong readers continued to improve. These learners' accuracy rates remained high and they gained in fluency and more sophisticated reading behaviors. Post test oral reading samples showed excellence in predicting, phrasing, and orchestrating all cueing systems. The other children, who had ineffective strategy use and little fluency on pretests, also became better readers. On post tests they integrated cues more consistently, predicted more accurately, and showed greater fluency.

The Continuing Group's qualitative oral reading results. Running Record findings indicated growth for all these learners. As in the Transitional Group, pretests showed that several children read with effective strategy use and some fluency. These readers integrated cues, searched for meaning, self-monitored, and read phrases or "chunks" of text. Others in the Continuing Group, either emerging conventional readers or those not yet reading consistently in print-governed ways, evidenced word-by-word reading, effective use of meaning and sentence structure (semantics and syntax), and knowledge of book language. Very similar to the Transition Group, emerging conventional readers did not integrate graphophonic information with other cues. Children who were not consistently reading in print-governed ways showed they read for meaning and structure, knew some sight words, and had early graphophonic knowledge. For example, on unknown words, most of them tried to match some first letter sounds. These learners also blended "real" reading with invented text using book-like language.

The Continuing Group's post test oral reading findings indicated that children who began second grade as strong readers continued to improve. These learners' accuracy rates remained high and they gained in fluency and acquired more sophisticated reading behaviors. Reading samples showed excellence in predicting, phrasing, and orchestrating all cueing systems. Generally, emerging conventional readers also gained in reading ability. For example, they integrated cues more effectively, predicted more accurately, and showed gains in fluency. The learners who began second grade not yet consistently reading in print- governed ways also made progress in learning to read. For example, one learner became much more fluent, searched for meaning by rereading, and made better use of letter/sound information. The other child attended fully to print and no longer "invented" text. He used beginning sounds and more sight words; however, effective integration of cueing systems was still difficult for this child.

Results on writing

Background information: Learning to write: Previous findings on focal children's writing established that both groups wrote frequently and produced writings of relative complexity (Dahl & Freppon, 1992; Dahl, Freppon, & McIntyre, 1992). These children had a grasp of the writing process. They demonstrated composing behaviors and the ability to produce text structures such as initial paragraphs, narrative prose, story-like and story writing. This proficiency was evident in the children who were reading conventionally by the end of first grade.

Two bodies of writing data, journals writing and all writing collected by the teachers in the month of April, were analyzed in the current study. This held writing data as parallel as possible. In both classrooms, journal writing was usually done following interactions with the teachers in which writing topics were often discussed. The children then wrote, for the most part, freely in their journals. The collection of all classroom writing in April showed the responses of the Transition Group after they were given more writing opportunities.

Journal writing. Both groups of children produced very similar amounts of journal writings. The Transition Group wrote 77 pieces and the Continuing Group 74. The quantity of drawing that elaborated meanings was also quite similar. Drawing was included in 20% of Transition Group's writings and 23% of the Continuing Group's.

Between group differences in children's writing were also found. Of the 77 pieces of the Transition Group's journal writing, 49% was structured as declarative statements. Initial paragraphs and narrative prose accounted for 39% of the writing. The six samples below are representative of these text structures.

- I played super nintendo on the atari game.
- I like it. It is good.
- I like second grade. It is fun.
- I saw the Toyota WEBN fier works. In the stadiam. I liked the lasers the best. I had a great time. I got it on tape.
- My favorite toy is P. J! She sparkles in the Dark. I hug her and my sister sleep with her.
- I would like to be in flordia because I'm going to Disneyland and sealand. And see Macho Man.

Two riddles, several letters, a copied poem, narrative-like lists, and labeling accounting for the remaining 11% of the journal writing. Twenty- four percent of all journal writing had some evidence of revision. Written language features, including text-like phrases, dialogue, use of repetition and poetic language, were found in 14% of the writings and 7% had titles or endings. Six representative samples of text-like phrases follow (these children's writings were most often collected from copies corrected by the teacher).

- " My house is quiet. It's quiet until....."
- " It vanished into thin air."
- " One day I saw a big hill..."
- " He was so, so, so, scarie."
- " Far away and far and far and far ...."
- " I'm black and red all over what am I?"

The Continuing Group's journal writings were structured in the following ways, 34% initial paragraph and narrative prose, 24% story-like, and 19% stories. The samples below are representative of each of these categories respectively (these children's writings were very rarely collected in copies corrected by the teacher).

The Holwen

I am going to the hern house - was it scare. My Friends
come over (and) then we goin. We see the gose it was scare.
We see the vhepie it was scare. We see the big spider,
it was scare. Then it was time to go home. THE END

My Family

I love my family We go evayer together We
play games to gether. We love each other Just
because sometimes we fight doen't meen that
we don't love each other enenay more We
will still love each other no mater how big
we get or how little we get We will still love
each other THE END

Holwen hunt

I had a hunt on holwen It was about pumpkins I
wanted a pumpkin so bad I could see one so I get a hunt
to get me a pumpkin When they came back the bake
no pumpkins " Were is my pumpkin?" We did not find
a pumpkin - go get me a pumpkin now or I am going to make
you out of (a) bagen oka ...soon they came bake with my
pumpkin and I ata my pie

In the Continuing Group's writing, 23% was organized in the beginnings of story chapters, spin-off stories (text relies heavily on a known story with some original meaning generated by the child), stories of mixed genre (including science fiction), and several poems. Seventy percent of all journal writing had some evidence of revision. Examples of poems follow (these writings are shown as near to the child's original representation as possible).

My house
My house gos up - and up- and up-
and up- and up - and up and up

Cras /

I like pizza
mmmm pizzas good
Ices Creme good
too
Me to me to
me to me to
how I like Ice cme
I do I do I do I do
I do to
A VERY One like's Ice
creme
The end

Written language features, including text-like phrases, dialogue, use of repetition of words or poetic language were found in 77% of the writings. Seventy-three percent of written artifacts had titles or endings. Some representative samples of these text-like phrases are provided below.

- " Millions of years ago when dinosaurs were living they roamed the land ... there lived a strange creature."
- " One bright moonlit ...."
- " My name is Willie the great. I am a detective. Tonight I got in trouble."
- " Yesterday, my dad surprised me when he came home from work with a dog."

April writing. Both groups of children generated stories and story-like writings in this data collection. In the Transition Group, seventeen pieces were written. Of these pieces 29% were either story-like or stories. Forty-seven percent were in letter form. These letters contained narrative prose and declarative statements. The remaining 23% included lists, a piece in science fiction form, and an initial paragraph. Use of written language features, such as text-like phrases and dialogue was evident in 47%. Titles or endings were also found in 47%. Thirty-five percent of the writings evidenced revision. The sample below is representative of the more complex writing and use of written language features.

> I have a key tht can open the door to the furture. In the furture there (are) hoover cars and new shaped buildings. People have different clothes too. Now I live in the future since I found the key. p.s. the year is 1000 0000 A. D I like it here.

In the Continuing Group focal children generated 39 pieces of writing. Of these 41% were stories, including three non-fiction pieces and one fairy tale. Thirty-three percent of the writings were organized in initial paragraphs and narrative prose or story-like form, and 20% in declarative statements. Over 90% percent of all writings evidenced written language features including text-like phrases, dialogue, and use of descriptive words. Seventy-two percent had titles or formalized endings, and 77% showed some evidence of revision. The sample below is representative of the more complex writing and use of written language features.

> Jump Ropening
>
> One day I was jump ropening with my friends. I jumped so high that I touched the clouds. Then I tired to get down but I couldn't I was stuck Then I began to cry. Then I look to the right (and) I saw a woman She said " Who are you?" I' am Schemeka Who are you?" "I 'am Mailpa I live here" " You do?" " Yes" " do you eat? " "Yes I eat apples from the apple tree" how do you sleep?" " I sleep on the clouds" Do you have -- Don't bother me kid" " (All) I want to say is can you help me?" " help you whet?" " go back jump ropening with my frands at school?" "sufe tap your feet three times and (say) there's no place like school, there's no place like school. Then I was still jump ropening and never went that jump - that high agien.
>
> The end

Comparisons of these children's writing within and across the two collections of data revealed several findings. Learners in both groups were similar in development toward writing stories and story-like pieces. Children generated more of this kind of text structure later in the school year (story writing increased from 0% to 29% in the Transition Group and 19% to 41% in the Continuing Group). In addition, ability in learning to read had an effect on writing in both groups. Generally, the most able readers in both curricula consistently produced more complex text structures. This was particularly true in the skills-based curriculum. In this curriculum, the most proficient reader generated all of the stories in the April collection and the majority of initial paragraphs and narrative prose in journal writing. This child also incorporated written language features in all but one instance in journal writing and more than twice as frequently as his peers in the April collection. In the Continuing Group reading ability also mattered, but in the whole language curriculum the difference was not nearly as pronounced. Although the most proficient reader wrote a few more stories and used written language features more frequently, all learners in this curriculum produced stories and incorporated many written language features in their April writing. Importantly, curricular differences, that cut across ability, were clear throughout the results on writing. In both collections of writing, analysis documented more complex text structures, more frequent and varied use of written language features, and greater incidence of revision in the Continuing Group than in the Transition Group. The tables below present a summary of comparative outcomes.

Table 3

Journal Writing Produced by Focal Learners in the Transition Group and the Continuing Group

Journals	Transition Group	Continuing Group
Total Number of Written Artifacts	77	74
Declarative Statements	49%	0%
Initial Paragraphs & Narrative Prose	39%	34%
Story-like and Story	0	43%
Evidence of Revision	24%	70%
Use of Written Language Features	14%	77%

Table 4
Writing Produced in April by Focal Learners in the Transition Group and the Continuing Group

April Writing	Transition Group	Continuing Group
Total Number of Written Artifacts	17	39
Story-like Writing	23%	24%
Story Writing	6%	41%
Evidence of Revision	35%	77%
Use of Written Language Features	47%	90%

Curricular differences, which cut across academic ability, were clear throughout the results on writing. Children in the Transition Group, particularly the less proficient learners, declined in writing production and quality.

Summary of children's sense making in the Transition and Continuing Groups: The end-of-year interviews with focal children in both the skills-based and whole language curricula provided an abstract of their perceptions. It is important to keep in mind that these learners, who differed developmentally in learning to read, entered second grade with very similar understandings. The following presentation delineates the interview questions followed by examples of each focal learner's actual talk. These examples help capture the sometimes subtle but important differences between these two groups at the end of second grade.

Table 5

End of Year Interview Questions and Responses from the Focal Children in the Transition Group and the Continuing Group

Responses from the Transition Group	Responses from the Continuing Group
Q: what is your favorite school work?	**Q: what is your favorite school work**
R: Writing,...I don't know when we started...but well we just started it..it was about Suart Little.	R: Writing, cause I learn to write neat words.
R: Math...you can get your papers everyday.	R: Writing,...it's fun, you learn more stuff and I feel proud.
R: Math...I like the equation I get.	R: Math...and well, I think reading.
R: Worksheets....we get to glue stuff.	R: Math and writing... you get ideas and you can write on paper, you can illustrate and stuff....and reading it gives you ideas to write something.
Q: What are you learning now in reading? (How are you learning that?)	**Q: What are you learning now in reading? (How are you learning that?)**
R: A lot of words (How ?) By saying them over and over...look at the word say it 2 or 5 times -then stare at it then cover it and then spell the word again	R: I know I can read a lot, hard books and words. (How?) By writing.
R: How to read bigger and bigger books. (How?) Practice...you go to try everyday.	R: Hard words like "Traditional"...and the story ... and like if I don't know a word I can ask the teacher. (How?) By writing more...you try to get a good story.
R: Ah, how to read bigger words.... and have someone teach your (How?) dinosaurs) Figure out the sounds.	R: Like plants and stuff and we are learning about dinosaurs (he named 6 (How?) From dinosaur bones and the scientists and they found the bones we got it in those books.
R: Oh, how to read... sometimes we read stuff like "I can" "I can too." (How?) First you read then you fill in the answer.	R: About science and doing experiments ...ever since Mrs. L. brought this in (points to stack of books) we really been reading!" (How?) I keep on trying.

Table 5 continued...

Q: What are you learning now in writing? (How will you learn that?)	**Q: What are you learning now in writing? (How will you learn that?)**
R: Yea, we are learning cursive, at first I didn't know how but now I can! (How?) By watching the teacher.	R: Lots of neat words (How?) by writing and reading, and by my teacher.
R: Cursive...and writing bigger words (How?) A long time ago (we) started the first thing we done lines and we started making letters.	R: Well, I'm learning I'm good....and I'm– we are gonna have this project, I'm gonna probably write about dinosaurs. And that writing is fun and easy. (How?) By doing more.
R: Ah, cursive....yea, write bigger words in cursive. (How?) Let someone like write it on something and you copy and you memorize and just keep in in your mind.	R: It is more fun than reading, cause you get to write and draw pictures, (How?) Putting it in - I mean putting in stories, talking to my friends and see if it makes sense and if it is a good story and gonna be published.
R: Well, we got these journals...and cursive... every work that we have to do we have to do it in cursive... sometimes we write in our journals... sometimes we write stories...we have to write stories now.	R: Ah, we learning how to write about more jets and stuff, we write together more...we see them on t.v. and then we write about it, it is kind of interesting and stuff.

Table 5 continued...

Q: What will you need or want to read and write when you grow up?	**Q: What will you need or want to read and write when you grow up?**
R: Our bills, and report cards, cards people send you. (Writing?) And letters, birthday cards.	R: Lots more books and stuff. (Writing?) To my mom and friends.
R: Hard books...with hard words and big words. When there was a button like do not push in case of fire then you could read that. (Writing?) About your mom and dad, ok stories and about your mom and dad. Yea and you are an author and you can make books.	R: Important stories, because if you want to know something you got to look in important stories or science books or something. (Writing?) Maybe long words and short...ah, important words...making sense words. A whole lot of things! Grocery lists, my things for work, things (they) want me to write - if I want to be a teacher I got to write a whole lot of things!
R: Stuff like letters...questions like at a business job. (Writing?) Notes...like messages to friends.	R: About jobs so I won't get fired and I make money...about school and if I'm a teenager about homework and stuff and if you want to be a scientists you read about science and ...I try my best I like to read. (Writing?) Job, work, and if you sign up for school- school work, and if you are an adult and they gave you papers to sign and stuff.
R: Hum...I'm not sure I'm not sure if I want to be a story writer when I grow up- I'm not sure...all kinds of traffic signs, and learn to read signs in airplanes because I'm gonna be a baseball player. (Writing?) I'm not sure...sign my contract to be a baseball player!	R: I want to be a artist, no, not a artist but a writer. .. authors are very valuable and they need special to help them think about stuff they need about two years to think of one story and the next year they will write it. (Writing?) I think harder books ...I need to read about how to count money so I can read about how to pay the bills and stuff and how to pay my taxes and I'll have to read about that and then when I grow up and I get married and everything and I'll read about babies and stuff. I'll make a journal about my baby and stuff and write letters to the government and ask them how the world is gonna be changed and stuff!

Q: question
R: response

The interview questions shown above were incorporated into an informal discussion of how the children felt about school at the end of second grade. Across both curricula children expressed sincere and positive responses about their teachers.

These interview data showed similar information in the direct and indirect ways children in both groups made sense of the role of reading and writing as functional and important in their lives as grown ups. For example, all children discussed written language as a positive factor in their future lives. There was also an interest in words that cut across both kinds of curriculum. All these young readers and writers knew about the role of words and word knowledge and thought it was important in learning.

Differences in children's perceptions varied according to curriculum. In the Transitional Group there was more focus on surface level aspects of written language (i.e. cursive handwriting) and nearly no discussion that linked reading and writing. In contrast, learners in the Continuing Group expressed knowledge of the mutually supportive roles of both processes. Focal children in the Continuing Group also incorporated discussion of content area reading in talk about how they would learn. Importantly, every child in this group voiced a sense of self as a reader and writer. Interview data, which was consistent with other findings, showed this response was evident only in the most proficient learner in the Transition Group. None of these children talked about reading in the content area. In sum, the responses of the Continuing Group reflected greater breadth and generally exhibited a literate and pro-active stance toward writing.

Portraits of focal learners: Descriptions of written language learning including knowledge and skills, and attitudes about reading, writing, and self

The results presented thus far have focused on the experience of two groups of learners. The following discussion provides a view of the individual focal children. These in-depth descriptions reveal the complexities of the young child's learning in school.Children from the Transition Group, Charlie, Ann, Carlie, and Jason are presented first. Descriptions of Isaac, Maury, Schemeka, and Willie from the Continuing Group follow.

Description of Charlie in the transition year.

Background: Charlie evidenced some written language knowledge when he entered the whole language kindergarten. A "self-starter" and motivated student, he consistently chose to interact with books. Charlie "read" stories with text-like words and phrases, told stories from memory using pictures, identified a few words on sight, and sometimes attempted letter/ sound mapping. He was less academically advanced in writing but did not avoid the task. Charlie frequently wrote by filling the page with known letters and words such as his name, zoo, dog, etc. and then told an elaborate story from this writing during sharing time. During the latter part of kindergarten, Charlie evidenced increased writing knowledge. He talked about letter/sound relations and spelled words with and for others. Charlie was among the "top" students throughout kindergarten and first grade.

In the whole language first grade, Charlie read and wrote avidly completing the year reading well above grade level. He persisted in literacy events across all contexts. On his own, he consistently chose to read a variety of texts, and took an interest in writing. He was a leader and had many friends. Charlie seemed to deeply desire interactions with written language and exhibited interest in his own progress as a learner. He searched for favorite books and engaged in reading for extended periods of time.

Pre and post second-grade assessments. Pretest oral reading was 100% accurate on both basal and trade book stories. Charlie was an extremely fluent reader. Any errors made were those of a " mature" reader. When he made mistakes, Charlie quickly and aptly used letter/sound cues to self-correct. Mid-year sampling on a self-selected basal story was 94% accurate and showed continued strength in self-monitoring. Documentation of specific oral reading strategies became somewhat difficult since Charlie read with such fluency. The end of second-grade assessment showed 99% accuracy.

Reading interviews were highly similar. For example, Charlie was consistent in his views. He liked reading, knew varied reading strategies, connected reading with writing, and knew the importance of both getting words and understanding the story. However, Charlie's pretest reading interview showed more talk about specific books and favorite authors than the post test.

Writing interview findings were also markedly similar. Charlie's responses indicated he liked writing, thought he was good writer, and showed strong metacognitive understandings at the beginning and end of second grade. One interesting and spontaneous post test comment was in his response to the question, *Do you sometimes get ideas to write from reading other stories?* Charlie replied, " Yes - (but) I haven't done any writing in a long time." This comment might have indicated that Charlie did not view his writings in second grade, which were nearly always assignments with one or more specifications (such as use of vocabulary words), as real writing.

Other pre/post results showed no change on responses to presentations of altered passages; Charlie completely rejected all forms of incomprehensible print. The Think Along Passage task showed similar results on reading strategies and metacognitive knowledge. Story retellings show a gain of 6 points.

Classroom writing in the transition year. Charlie's early second grade writing diminished slightly in amount and in complexity when compared to first-grade. For example, in the latter part of first grade, Charlie's writing was usually structured in story form including character, sequence of events, some problem and or solution, and consistent use of written language features such as text-like phrases, descriptive words, and dialogue. Early writing in second grade consisted primarily of declarative sentences and texts organized in narrative-like lists. Some initial paragraph, narrative prose, and use of written language features were evident. However, this complex writing occurred less frequently than in the whole language curriculum. Charlie produced more writing than his second grade peers in the transition year. His writing was also more fluent and well organized. Writing samples taken at the end of the year documented an increase in Charlie's use of written language features, story form, and non-fiction writing. This change became evident as the skills-based curriculum included more writing opportunities, reading of literature, and collaborative work.

Sense making in the transition year. Charlie worked diligently at completing all assignments accurately. Except for a period of anxiety in the first semester, when he frequently expressed concern about getting his work done, Charlie "sailed through" second grade. Teacher interviews throughout the year confirmed that he was the "top" student in the class and that he was not a student she worried about. Charlie engaged actively in independent, teacher guided, and peer involved contexts. Classroom observations document some knowledge of a sense of self as reader and writer and persistence.

In periods of free time (which were not frequent since he seemed to pace himself in order to complete his work on time for recess and lunch), Charlie chose to read on his own only once in second grade observations. This occurred in early October after he announced, " I'm done with my work " and went to the book and game table, selected a magazine and returned to his desk to read. At other free time periods he worked on the computer or sat at his desk quietly. Charlie was consistently well motivated to "do school" and to read and write in teacher guided contexts or peer collaborations. He aligned himself with another very successful student in his class and interacted as much as possible with him. When changes in the curriculum included collaborative work he seemed to enjoy very much working with this child and other partners. Frequently he and his partner not only completed their reading and writing assignments accurately and efficiently but also quizzed one another on spelling words or reading "fast and lots." As indicated above, when reading with the teacher Charlie's level of engagement was very clear as this field note representative sample shows.

> Reading group has begun and flash card drill is underway. Charlie participates actively.
> " Ok, ok, give me another word!" (indicating he wants his turn at flash card drill to come faster).
> As the words are discussed Charlie says,
> " Carriage, I can spell carriage, C A R R I A G E." He then looked for the word in his book.
> The teacher finished up the flash card routine and discussed the story briefly. Charlie watched her closely (shown in nods of his head, and eye contact, and leaning across the table).
> After this the teacher calls on Charlie to read.
> He read with excellent intonation emphasizing a conversational tone of voice when reading dialogue. There were no miscues - he and one repetition to keep the reading fluent.
> As other children take turns reading, Charlie provided words at their slightest hesitation. He watched his book intently as each child read, his eyes tracked print, he said some words under his breath, and sometimes said words before the child who is reading could utter them.

During silent reading in the second semester Charlie consistently selected more than one book and nearly always read them. When reading Charlie's eyes tracked print, he occasionally mouthed a word or sub-vocalized under his breath, and he glanced at pictures usually just after reading. This silent reading mode dominated when he was not called on to read orally.

Charlie's perceptions, as shown in patterns of talk and action, reflected a successful, pro-active student. Generally, the transition year documented no significant change. He still desired interactions with written language. However, his behaviors were more competitive than in the previous two years in whole language. Charlie became task oriented and talked frequently about his good grades to the point of bragging. Standardized test scores in reading and report card grades were high. The teacher interviews indicated no areas of concern. Neither the initial transition to a skills-based curriculum nor the later changes in this classroom appeared to affect outcomes on conventional measures of academic achievement.

It was also clear, however, that Charlie engaged in literate behaviors such as choosing to read and write independently much less frequently than in the previous two years in whole language. Interestingly, the changes in this skills-based curriculum appeared to ease tensions in Charlie. For example, in the first semester he sometimes voiced anxiety saying " I can't wear the microphone today." or "I have too much work to do!" If the researcher was so much as a minute late in returning his papers after copying them he exclaimed, " My God you frightened me to death." and "All this work!!" In the latter months of school, Charlie no longer seemed anxious and it was then he interacted with peers playfully by reading "fast and lots".

The parent interview information indicated Charlie's mother saw no change in her son. He liked school as he always had and continued to show a great interest in reading. Mother noted that Charlie did not ask to be read to as often as first-grade but that he read to his brother more frequently. When asked about writing she acknowledged that he did not seem interested in writing at home.

Description of Ann in the transition year.

Background: Kindergarten scores on entering written language knowledge were among the lowest of the children tested. Ann's whole language kindergarten and first grade teachers agreed that she was a hard working child, a real "teacher pleaser" who took initiative and had a strong desire to do well in school. Two years of classroom observations confirmed this. Ann consistently and actively engaged in reading and writing, across contexts, throughout both years of whole language instruction.

In first grade Ann exhibited fewer reading and writing strategies than many of her peers but applied those she knew with vigor. Her stance toward literacy was persistent and pro-active. Patterns of talk and action indicated a strong sense of self as a reader and a writer. Ann consistently chose to read and write on her own. By the end of first grade her reading achievement was "low average" based on analysis of oral reading samples and teacher judgment. Ann frequently over-used the graphophonic cueing system, but her teacher thought she would do fine in second grade provided her reading strategies became better balanced. Home information showed that Ann's mother noticed a marked change in her during first grade. She said Ann read environmental print (street signs, the name on her baseball cap, and grocery store labels, etc.) at every opportunity. Ann also talked about school, played school, and talked about books at length. Mother was particularly impressed with Ann's desire to write. Mother noted that when she took Ann to work with her on the night shift, she had trouble keeping enough paper in her purse to keep Ann happy. She simply wrote on every scrap of paper.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Ann's reading accuracy score was 75% in a second grade basal story and 66% in a trade book of similar difficulty. Although these texts were a challenge for Ann she had fairly good fluency, and her strategy use showed she checked for meaning and tried to predict. In the trade book reading, which was somewhat more difficult for Ann, she tended to rely heavily on graphophonic cues and infrequently integrated meaning and syntactic cues. However, evidence of self-monitoring was still evident. A mid-year sample showed similar reading strategies. By the end of second grade, Ann's highest accuracy score was 98% and strategies were much more balanced.

Ann's reading interviews were similar. For example, in both interviews Ann expressed understandings about varied reading strategies. However, on the pretest she said she made up parts of a story or filled in the gap if she forgot some of it, " I did in first grade - - and you can write your own stories in our journal..." During the post test reading interview Ann said she did not make up parts or fill in gaps if she forgot some of the story. Writing interviews revealed several differences. For example, pretest responses indicated she liked writing and that it wasn't hard for her. Post test responses showed negativity. She said there was nothing she liked about writing and that it was hard for her because she didn't know how to spell words right. However, similarities were also present. For example, Ann was clear on several points showing that she knew about the importance of words, the supportive connection between reading and writing, and that she would write her own story better than the teacher's. Results on altered passages and retellings were highly similar. Post test results on a measurement of metacognitive reading strategies showed a decline of several points .

Writing in the transition year. Ann's first-grade writing included varied text structures such as initial paragraphs, narrative prose, and frequent use of written language features. In whole language curriculum she wrote often and eagerly. However, writing fluency was not strong. Writing was not easy for Ann, but she persisted. First-grade writing was often sustained for more than 20 minutes. As in reading, orchestration of strategies was not yet attained.

Ann's writing in the first semester in skills-based curriculum declined in amount and complexity. For example, she produced a few declarative statements and very little else. Her responses seemed focused on completing the assigned task. Ann also appeared anxious about her writing, and gave herself a 100 and an A+ on every page of her writing journal. The end-of-year samples reflected some change in Ann's writing. This occurred as the curriculum provided opportunities to write more often, read trade books, and work collaboratively. For example, in the spring she wrote on her own at home, creating a list of possible names for a story character, and brought it to school to share. She also made two books in class and her text structures showed narrative prose, story forms including character, sequence of events, and problem /solution. There was a marked increase in use of written language features such as formulaic endings, dialogue, and text-like phrases. Ann's writing blossomed in the last two months of school.

Sense making in the transition year. Ann was considered "low average" with a strong desire to please the teacher and succeed in school. Ann made the transition to the conventional, skills-based curriculum with no great difficulty. Classroom observations documented progress in reading and success in completing assignments. All three teacher interviews supported this finding.

Talk and action documenting Ann's sense of self as a reader and writer were not evident during second grade. In this transition year, Ann chose to write once on her own in February during free time when she created a hall pass for another girl during indoor recess. On one other occasion, in the spring, she came to the researcher and asked to read aloud. Most often when Ann completed her assignments and had opportunities to read or write on her own she sat quietly watching other children or cleaned out her desk. When silent reading time was established, she often selected more than one book and usually read some connected text.

Ann frequently discussed reading and writing tasks, but did not show a perception of herself as a reader and writer in the skills-based curriculum. (This perception had been very prominent in the whole language curriculum.) Ann's desire to do well in the skills-based classroom was evident across all contexts and she was even more active in teacher-guided and peer-involved contexts. Her diligence in task completion and concern about accuracy are evident in this representative sample.

> Partners have been selected by the teacher and Ann sits on the floor with another little girl. They are working on writing a recipe for pizza.
> Ann said, " You need salt and pepper. " Then she turned to her partner spelling the word, " Salt, S A L ...."
> Ann said, " This is what you do (indicated by pointing to the worksheet that her partner is to write in a certain place)
> " Do you have to do this in cursive?" asked Ann. Her partner went to ask the teacher about cursive writing. Ann then picked up her paper and read her writing word for word and announced, "I'm done."
> As her partner returned, Ann said, "We only got two more hours to get these done!" Ann hummed to herself as she turned to the next assignment.

Classroom observations show this task-oriented stance and conscientious effort across contexts. Ann seemed to enjoy working with peers a great deal. For example, prior to reading and writing with others, she expressed worry about not getting her work done and resulting loss of privileges or bad grades. Her habit of giving herself high marks, a 100 and A+ on every page in her writing journal, also reflected this concern.

The parent interview indicated that Ann liked school as much as she always had. Ann no longer asked to be read to, which her mother viewed as a more mature behavior. At home, Ann continued to play school and read to her younger sister as she had in first grade. However, her mother noted that Ann did not talk about books or write as she had in first grade.

Description of Carlie in the transition year.

Background: Carlie's kindergarten written language knowledge was very low on all measures. In addition, her stance toward literacy was problematic (Freppon, 1992). Carlie did not choose literacy on her own. In kindergarten, sense-making patterns did not indicate that Carlie saw herself as a reader and writer. Nor did she persist independently. Indeed, she was reluctant to do so even with a good deal of support from the teacher. Painfully shy, she showed little if any sign of willingness to take the risks so important in literacy learning. In first grade Carlie began to be motivated. Motivated behaviors arose nearly exclusively in contexts with peers and the teacher. However, by the end of first grade she consistently read and wrote in independent contexts. Carlie chose literacy on her own and robust patterns of engagement with reading and writing were evident across contexts. For example, as she read a self-selected interactive picture book by herself, Carlie persisted in "getting all the words" right over a 20 minute period of highly strategic reading. Interviews with her first-grade teacher supported the fact that Carlie had acquired a range of motivated behaviors necessary for learning. Her teacher reported she was no longer worried about Carlie because- - " She goes straight to her writing folder, sits down and knows what she wants to do.... she writes fluently and willingly." End of first-grade writing samples showed good progress and 90% accuracy in reading. Carlie's reading showed a strategic and engaged approach with balanced cues and self-monitored behaviors.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Pretest oral reading samples showed 96% accuracy on a second-grade basal story and 99% accuracy on a trade book. Carlie's use of strategies was very effective showing not only knowledge of what to do in reading but strong organization of strategies. In December she read a second-grade basal story of her choice with 99% accuracy and good fluency. Post test reading was 96% accurate.

Generally, reading interviews showed more similarities than differences which was consistent with many of her peers in the Transition Group. However, Carlie differed from her peers in that there was little or no evidence of change in her writing interviews. Still a very shy child, Carlie was hard to interview. This information seemed to fall short of tapping the knowledge and attitudes exhibited in daily classroom behaviors. The pre- and post test outcomes on altered passages and the metacognitive strategies measure were similar -- her retelling score showed a gain of several points.

Writing in the transition year. Carlie's second grade writing samples were few in number due in part to frequent absences from school. The quality of writing contrasted sharply with first-grade samples. For example, some first grade text structures showed narrative prose while early second grade texts consisted primarily of a few declarative statements and a narrative-like list. April writing samples, taken after the skills-based curriculum included more writing, indicated an increase in the amount of writing. Carlie also began to again structure her writing in narrative forms. One sample included written language features (i.e. once upon a time). Generally, there was a modest improvement in production of more complex texts by the end of the year.

Sense making in the transition year. For Carlie the transition to a conventional, skills-based classroom proved difficult. As noted above, during the first year in whole language curriculum Carlie did not exhibit an active stance toward literacy. However, independent motivated behaviors were robust by the end of first grade in whole language. Carlie took initiative, chose to read and write, and exhibited clear sense of herself as a reader and writer. Importantly, she also persisted in literacy interactions on her own.

Within the first few months in the skills-based curriculum, Carlie's behaviors were markedly different. She received failing grades and her attendance in school, which had never been good, declined even more. Carlie missed 24 days and was tardy 10 times in first grade. In second grade she missed over 40 days and was tardy 15 times. Carlie no longer persisted in reading and writing and homework assignments were incomplete. The teacher sent home notes expressing concern and papers that showed Carlie's lack of engagement. In school Carlie often sat with one reading or writing assignment and worked on it sporadically over an extended period. This behavior caused her to fall even farther behind and passivity increased. Carlie frequently sat quietly, fiddled with her pencil or her hair, and stared into space during independent and group instruction time. The following example is representative of her responses in the first semester of second grade. Morning reading and writing assignments are being explained by the teacher.

> Carlie sat in her seat and did not appear to move except for an occasional glance at others around the room. She folded and unfolded her hands and stared into space. As spelling was discussed, the teacher noticed Carlie did not have a book. Carlie said her book was at home. The teacher told her to look on with another child. Carlie said, "ok" but did not look at her peer's book. She remained very quiet and twisted

> her hair around her finger. When the English assignment was discussed, Carlie got her book and seemed to follow along for a few moments. Then she began to stare straight ahead and did not look at her book again.

Until well past the mid-year break, the homework chart showed long lines of blank spaces by Carlie's name. Passive behaviors remained consistent until the classroom context changed. Small group interactions with the teacher and peers were positive. For example, when Carlie was with the teacher in reading group she participated actively. She read accurately and fluently, provided words for others, answered questions, and correctly identified flash card words. Often she seemed to "come alive" in this kind of interaction. On one occasion with another child, Carlie also showed increased engagement and motivation. A description of this event follows.

> With her papers on her desk, Carlie sat quietly and stared into space, when Ann passed by she stopped for a few moments. Ann pointed to a word on Carlie's cross-word puzzle paper and asked, "What is it?" Carlie told Ann the word and immediately asked Ann about other words.
> " Ok, so what is this word?" to which Ann answered by telling the word. The girls seemed happy (both smiled broadly) and they went over several words in this way. Then Ann moved on to sharpen her pencil.

This activity with Ann indicated that social interaction was very important to Carlie. Indeed, this factor had been critical to her acquisition of motivated behaviors in first grade. In the skills-based curriculum, in independent or large group contexts, Carlie seemed "lost".

A December interview with her teacher documented that Carlie was a good reader who put forth very little initiative. Her teacher was worried about her and particularly about her frequent absences from school. Later in the year, as the classroom routines changed, Carlie began to engage in independent contexts and group instruction. For example, she completed more seatwork reading and writing assignments. A teacher interview confirmed this change and showed the teacher was less worried but still concerned about Carlie's lack of motivation and positive attitude toward school work. In none of the teacher interview data throughout the school year was it ever the case that Carlie's reading skills were in doubt.

By the last three months of second grade, Carlie diligently completed assignments. School attendance, however, continued to be a problem. She missed 19 days in the second semester. There were no sense-making patterns indicating a sense of self as a reader or writer.

Carlie finished second grade with success on a standardized test and report card grades. However, she did not regain her original strength as an independent learner. Her talk and action were much like those described in Purcell-Gates & Dahl's 1991 account of children's "going though the motions" in reading and writing. For example, in the 20 minute silent reading period in the second semester, Carlie was observed actually reading connected text once. At other times she looked at pictures, read some words, and looked through the book. Carlie usually took one book to her desk and after finishing it she sat quietly until the end of this period. On one occasion, during free time when she could have chosen to read or write, Carlie got a puzzle rather than a book. Most often, when finished with assignments, Carlie stayed at her desk and watched others or "played with" her pencil and fingers. Classroom observations did not capture a single instance of Carlie choosing to read or write on her own in second grade.

The teacher's end-of-year interview showed Carlie had many academic strengths, " She would have made the honor roll this spring if it hadn't been for her poor attendance." Carlie was a good reader through out second grade (i.e. 95% reading accuracy on grade level texts). Teacher interview comments supported findings on Carlie's writing " Her writing did not improve; she simply doesn't write unless she has to". Carlie ended the transition year successful on conventional measures of academic success. She also improved markedly in getting assignments completed as the skills-based curriculum changed to include working with peers and reading children's literature.

Parent interview information confirmed Carlie's difficulties in the skills-based curriculum. Mother said she had gotten off to a bad start in second grade. But after bringing home lots of papers with failing grades, Carlie's work began to improved. Mother noted that at home, Carlie seemed to be reading as much as ever but that she rarely wrote and did not play school with her sister as she had in the past. As was the case with other focal children's parents, Carlie's mother confirmed that she seemed more mature and did not ask to be read to as often.

Description of Jason in the transition year

Background: Tests of entering knowledge in kindergarten evidenced little written language knowledge. However, Jason learned to "do school" in kindergarten with apparent ease and he was an engaged student. His stance toward literacy was active across contexts throughout kindergarten and first grade. Jason made good progress in reading and frequently chose to read on his own,with his teachers, and peers. Depending on the text, he read on or somewhat above grade level at the end of first grade. Jason's responses to stories indicated a sensitive nature and a penchant for art. Jason wrote about music and talked about it in group time, he responded strongly to storybook illustrations and color, and he consistently chose to read poetry and nursery rhyme books. Once, on returning from the library Jason held up a new book of nursery rhymes and announced, " I got this book so I can read that one better " (as he pointed to a classroom book of nursery rhymes he had been reading for weeks). Jason was an independent and persistent learner. Analysis of first-grade reading showed use of varied strategies and self-monitoring. Jason read basal texts with over 90% accuracy. In teacher assigned writing contexts, he exhibited less enthusiasm. Results on amount and kind of writing showed Jason wrote no less than the majority of focal children. The quality of his writing was also on par with this group. In first grade he produced some narrative-like prose and cohesive declarative statements. At times Jason seemed to have difficulty getting started, but he had a strategy to help him solve this problem. For example, as he began to write, Jason paused, stared ahead for a moment, then turned to the researcher and said " Could you give me a start out?". The researcher responded " Just do the best you can." " I always just start with I and then write it" Jason responded. "Oh" said the researcher. Jason then turned and began to write. His sense of self as a reader and writer was robust over two years in the whole language curriculum.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Jason's pretest reading showed he read a second grade basal story and trade book with 93% and 96% accuracy and demonstrated self-monitoring and good control of book language. Jason achieved 90% accuracy on a mid-year reading of a self-selected, second-grade basal story. However, on this sample fluency declined and his reading was somewhat "choppy". Post tests showed 100% accuracy and improved fluency.

Reading interviews indicated more similarities than differences. However, results on Jason's writing interviews revealed differences. For example, at the beginning of second grade he indicated he liked writing and particularly liked writing books. At the end of the year he said he did not like writing and added that he used to like to write books. Jason also named fewer favorite things to write about. Writing interview similarities were also present. Jason remained clear about reading and writing being mutually supportive processes, that lots of writing promoted good writing, and that meaning was as important or more important in writing than getting the words right. Pre- and post test outcomes showed little if any change on altered passages, the measurement of metacognitive strategies, and retellings.

Writing in the transition year. Jason's writing in the first half of second grade showed some decline in complexities. For example, early second-grade writings were almost exclusively one or two declarative statements. However, during the last two months of school (with increased writing opportunities, reading trade books, and peer collaboration), Jason began to generate writing in a story mode. These writings included text-like phrases and inclusion of character. His singular use of declarative sentences declined. Drawing to elaborate meanings and revisions were evident at the close of second grade.

Sense making in the transition. Jason began second grade with robust patterns of engagement in classroom reading and writing. However, he was clearly in trouble after a few weeks in skills-based curriculum. Jason behaved passively and often failed to complete even one assignment a day. The following field note represents his classroom behavior during independent work time.

10:06 a.m. Jason got a piece of paper, looked at the board and began to copy. He stopped, looked around the room, picked up something off the floor, looked at his paper, and moved his pencil around on his desk. Jason brought a paper from his desk to the researcher and showed a picture of a feather he had drawn. He said " It's a fluffy one like from a Cardinal".

10:09 a.m. Jason returned to his seat, talked to a peer, picked up his cartoon worksheet and showed it to the boy he just spoke to. He talked to the boy about it- - pointing to words and pictures. Then he read something he had written in a speech bubble on the cartoon worksheet.

10:11 a.m. Jason came to the researcher, asked how to spell, yucky, and was told to " Do the best you can". Jason responded " Y U C K Y" spelling the word accurately.
He went back to his seat, took up his pencil for about one minute, put it down and stared into space.

10:15 Jason sat at his desk, looked at the board, looked around the room, and looked down at his papers.

10:20 He began to work on a new worksheet. Jason traced the picture, borrowed a marker from a peer and colored the picture, one part at a time, in several different colors. The coloring continued until the teacher stopped class for recess.

10:30 Jason did not go to recess. He stayed in the classroom in order to finish his morning work. No assignment was completed during this recess period.

Talk and action such as those shown above were evident in every classroom observation from fall to late winter of second grade. Behaviors documenting Jason's view of himself as reader and writer and persistence in independent contexts were not present. His level of engagement in reading and writing tasks was very low. However, Jason's responses also indicated that some tasks were more motivating than others. Throughout the period when he exhibited the least engagement, some motivated behaviors arose when tasks called for a creative response. For example, activities that included any art or creative writing sparked Jason's engagement. Writing cartoon dialogue was particularly motivating. Several times, Jason shared this writing with a peer by reading it and asking his peer to respond by reading back.

In late January, during a morning when very little was accomplished, the researcher talked to Jason. She asked him about his work by saying, "Tell me about that. " Jason did not respond. "Is it because you don't know how to do it or that you can't do it?" Jason said, "No." " Then why don't you get your work done ?" Jason said, "I don't like it.....cause every day....every day I don't like it." Cursive handwriting assignments seemed to be most difficult for Jason and typically they were to be completed first. A classroom observation documented Jason's "working at" cursive writing for over 20 minutes and completing less than one line of letters. Again the researcher said, " Tell me about that." Jason replied, " Well, I'm not very good at it." Like Carlie, once he fell behind he appeared to engage even less, and thus he slipped farther and farther behind. Teacher interview information confirmed that Jason had trouble with fine motor skills which made handwriting difficult. Teacher interviews also showed great concern about his lack of motivation and supported the fact that Jason did very well on the few assignments he completed. His academic ability was clearly not in question.

Jason's patterns of talk and action differed markedly in teacher- guided events. In reading group he usually participated actively. Jason read fluently, gave words to others, decoded words on flash cards, earned stickers, and made a game of counting his flash cards to see who had the most. Usually he carefully watched others read and monitored his own reading behaviors. On returning to his seat, however, Jason resumed the same disengaged behaviors.

Most changes in the skills-based classroom were clearly established by February. Trade books had replaced basal readers and children often worked collaboratively in groups of two. Learners sat together in various places around the classroom, on the floor, and at desks and tables. During the last two months of second grade, traditional reading groups were discontinued completely. Children usually read together in partner groups, there was a silent reading period, a time individuals of reading to the teacher, and more writing opportunities. A fairly dramatic change in Jason's responses coincided with these new routines. He began to complete nearly all his assignments and was much more engaged as the following example shows.

> Children have been assigned to partners and Jason sits beside his partner at a round table. He looks at her takes up his work page and begins to write.
>
> "I can't wait until I'm on .....well guess I'll just start." Jason said. Writing quickly he noted, " I'm almost done...I'm right there on row....I'm done - I did (the) fourth row." His partner responded, " I'm done! "So am I " said Jason, "I'm on my second."

This kind of behavior continued throughout the morning. Jason completed all his assignments, took a spelling test, and went outside for recess with the other children. After recess he hurried to the researcher and showed a book he had written in class. During silent reading Jason selected several books and read all of one and part of another. This kind of response continued until the year's end. In late May Jason announced with a big smile, " I read these two whole books." Such talk suggested the beginning of a re-emergence of his sense of self as a reader. An end-of-year teacher interview confirmed the change in Jason. Academic work was good, as it had always been, and he consistently completed assignments. Parent interview information showed that Jason read at home, but his mother was unsure about writing. Mother noted that she was greatly relieved that Jason had begun to do better in school. During the home visit Jason himself informed the researcher, " And I didn't fail either."

Description of Isaac in the continuing year .

Background: Isaac's kindergarten tests of entering knowledge indicated he had some written language understandings. During the first two years of school, in whole language curriculum, he was an active student who chose to interact with books and write on his own. Isaac readily learned to "do school" and enjoyed academic and social success. By the end of first grade he was reading and writing as well or better than his peers. Isaac was a highly persistent first grader. For example, one day he selected about ten student published books, and read one after the other. He continued to read as the teacher flipped the classroom lights off signaling lunch time. A child passed by him and grabbed the book Isaac was reading and pointed toward the door where children were lining up. Isaac took the book back and rapidly scanned each page - his eyes tracking the print. Isaac finished the book, and put it in the "already read stack", before joining his peers who were on their way down the hall.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Oral readings yielded 100% accuracy scores on both basal and trade book stories. Isaac's reading was highly fluent. Like Charlie, his errors were that of a mature reader who predicts well. He self-corrected and actively monitored. A mid-year self-selected second-grade sample showed 99% accuracy and continued use of sophisticated behaviors. Isaac processed print quickly and silently, many reading strategies had "gone underground". Post test accuracy rates showed 99% accuracy and excellent fluency.

Reading interviews showed general stability. There was an increase in naming things that could be read beyond books and in the number of times Isaac spontaneously linked reading and writing. For example, when asked if good readers ever come to something they don't know (and what they might do about it), Isaac responded, " I'll write about it. Skip it and come back later. Find it out. See what it sounds like." Comments such as these and those below revealed an increase in metacognitive talk demonstrating persistence, and a sense of self as a reader and writer. " I read it over and over again. I think I'm going to write about the story. I wait for writing workshop and I do it again." " Yes when something good happens (in the story he read). I would want it to happen to me. I read better. I wish it would happen to me."

Writing interviews were positive and stable. Isaac liked to write; he said it was easy for him and that he did it all the time. He noted that both handwriting and making a good story were important. Spontaneous comments that linked reading and writing as mutually supportive systems were also present at the beginning and end of the continuing year.

Other pre- and post test findings were generally stable: altered passages (total rejection), the metacognitive strategy measure (a decrease of four points), and retellings (an increase of four points).

Writing in the continuing year. Comparison of early-second-grade writing to end-of-first-grade indicated some change. Isaac continued to write frequently and fairly fluently, and text structures were primarily narrative-like lists, initial paragraphs, and narrative prose. However, about mid-year some writings took poetic form and he also began to move away from spin-off stories (those structured like familiar storybooks) to more original pieces. Use of text-like words increased and in the second semester Isaac produced non-fiction and original story. His writing was also sustained over longer periods. For example, one 15 page piece (many pages were not completely filled), about the importance of rain forests was written over several days. It began as non-fiction -- about the importance of rain forests and became a rather complex story that focused on carrying out a rescue mission in the threatened rain forest. Isaac's use of written language features and revision was evident all through the third year in whole language curriculum.

Sense making in the continuing year. Isaac's view of himself as a reader and writer and persistence was robust across all contexts. Second-grade classroom observations documented that Isaac read several books daily, searched for favorite books, and routinely reread. During reading events, he interacted with books in highly engaged ways. His reading was strategic, fluent, and consistently self-monitored. Writing events evidenced personal investment, a desire to write, and knowledge of writing skills. The following samples, drawn from various data sources, are representative of the sense-making pattern - - a sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence. In the first episode, Isaac approached the researcher, held his writing folder close to her, pointed to his papers, and talked about his writing.

> " I'm writing a story about Isaac, and Tommy the marvelous medicine men. It's gonna be about Tom; it's gonna be about all three (boys). He is gonna be real sick (and) gonna make medicine and give it to Tommy, Tommy is gonna get 50 spoonsfulls. He gonna get real, real big and we gonna make Isaac and Tom (the) second marvelous medicine man ...it is ...and we gonna make him real real tiny and ...we gonna have three stories of marvelous men."

Information from teacher interviews:

> Isaac (and several other children) are all reading above level. They are writing willingly. They want to get out paper and can't wait for reading/writing work time. When I introduce something one week they use it ...it is like everything we do they like get and use it. They understand that...this is for a reason and next time I'm going to use this information. You know, to better myself.
>
> The teacher told the researcher how Isaac was "just flying" in his reading. He was part of a group that asked her if they could organize a reading group in which all the children had the same book and took turns reading round robin style. The teacher noted that Isaac and Tommy found copies of Good Charlotte . Isaac asked if they got six people could they all read together. So the teacher asked the children who wanted to read Good Charlotte and Isaac went around asking too. The teacher thought it was interesting and funny because he knew just who could read that book. Isaac organized it all.
>
> The teacher said, " If it is possible I see them (Isaac included) as even more independent. With Isaac (and several other children) the big thing is writing non-

fiction. They are writing to learn something rather than just enjoyment ...they will come and tell me what they have learned... ." "They say, Do you know what I just read?"

Parent interview : 5-8-92 Isaac's father and the researcher discussed his second grade year. Father noted he cannot keep his son supplied with paper and opened a drawer in a small desk in the living room to show a ream of paper he had bought for Isaac. Father said Isaac writes constantly and that he has "good frustration" because Isaac wants him to listen to his stories all the time. Smiling broadly father said, " I'm not complaining, but it gets tiresome." Father added that Isaac is very happy in school and that he often noticed that Isaac reads his older sister's books and goes to his room to read by himself. He also said Isaac had begun to correct his and other's grammar. At the close of the discussion, his father voiced his concern about how to help Isaac continue with this same kind of interest and eagerness to learn. He said his only was "Maintaining."

Isaac ended second grade with above average reading scores on a standardized test. These scores were equivalent to Charlie's in the skills-based curriculum. Report card and classroom information confirmed solid academic progress and a very positive attitude. Patterns of talk and action throughout second grade indicated that Isaac had a strong sense of himself as a reader and writer. His talk consistently reflected what he knew how to do, what he planned to do, and what was difficult or required extra effort. Isaac persisted across contexts and his attention to accuracy was as strong as ever.

Description of Maury in the continuing year

Background: Scores on kindergarten entering written language knowledge were among the lowest of all children tested. During kindergarten Maury primarily watched others and engaged sporadically in reading activities. He occasionally showed interest in writing, liked to draw, and produced some letter-like forms. For the most part his interest was sparked by storybook readings. It was then that Maury watched the teacher intently and expressed enjoyment shown through some verbalizations, nods of recognition, and infrequent smiles. During first-grade Maury's interest in books grew markedly and he clearly demonstrated preferences for some stories. He chose books on his own and became more consistently engaged during storybook readings. Maury frequently commented on stories and memorized stories in read-along activities. In writing events Maury was very dependent on the teacher or peers. Typical of early, emergent literacy. learning behaviors seemed inconsistent. For example, there were times when he actively worked to express intended meaning and asked how to spell words. At other times he wrote letters and letter groupings and assigned meanings after. Maury's first-grade reading was not yet print governed (Sulzby, 1985) and primarily consisted of reading familiar books by memory and using picture clues. Maury knew the purpose of reading, chose to read in all contexts, and engaged frequently in very intense ways. Although he was among the most troubled learners in his class and had his share of "bad days," sense making patterns demonstrated a sense of self as a reader and writer. Maury chose literacy on his own and placed himself with teacher, peers, and supportive contexts that helped him engage in reading and writing.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. A pre-test oral reading was 50% accurate (pre-primer tradebook) and included a mix of inventing the story, reading for meaning and structure, and mapping some letters and speech sounds. In this sample Maury invented text that made sense with known words such as the, to, and go. Self-monitoring was demonstrated in attempted self-corrections and rereadings. Maury's spontaneous verbalizations such as " No, that can't be home - home is H O U S E" also indicated he was actively working with graphophonic cues. Mid-year oral reading samples showed similar reading behaviors and a trend toward more focus on print with frequent refusals. Primarily, Maury integrated rendering the story from memory with his knowledge of written language, some known words, and use of picture cues. Reading for Maury was a complex task requiring sustained effort. End-of-second-grade reading showed 75% accuracy with an early first-grade text. However, this score marked improvement from 49%. Results on altered passages showed change. Pretest data indicated Maury's schema for reading was not upset by incomprehensible print. However, this post test measure indicated it was. For example, when shown print consisting of letter strings, he said " (It's) not a story." Maury's response on other passages also showed growth in emergent literacy behaviors. While not always rejecting altered passage, he focused on print a great deal and read many words he knew. Retellings post tests were higher and his talk revealed metacogntive understandings. For example, retellings included identification of the story problem and significant events. In addition, Maury spontaneously brought to the researcher's attention parts of the story where he had made reading errors. It was as if he wanted to make clear that he wasn't reading as well as he wished. He wanted to talk about his mistakes and clarify what he had done. Maury took risks that revealed an inquiring, active stance toward learning. He talked about reading strategies he used. " Well I just skip that page and read the next page and when I hear somebody else reading that word, I think a little and again and I say - I can read that, and I get it and read it." Pre- to post test scores on metacognitive strategies showed a gain of seven points which was the highest of all children tested.

Writing in the continuing year. The number of written artifacts from September through December was nearly on par with Maury's more academically successful peers. However, his texts were not as complex and took the form of lists and labels. He drew frequently to elaborate meaning. Several spring writing samples showed more complexity (spin-off stories and narrative-like prose). Writings also included narrative-like lists and some declarative sentences. Many pieces were organized into book form with titles and formulaic endings. One piece was clearly story-like, included dialogue, and a "bed to bed" structure. A written comment from his teacher during this time helped confirm his progress: "Maury - - A good day! Read a color book and then wrote about what color things were... asked for help from another student on (words) room and bike. He asked me how to spell hand. He gave me the /H/ and then I said what do you hear - I stretched it /h/ - and ...he smiled and wrote A N D. (He) began another story and put it away and began a pollution poster - worked hard all morning." Maury's writing also showed an increase in revision.

Sense making in the continuing year. Maury's sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence in choosing literacy on his own were evident throughout second grade. However, he differed from more academically successful peers in two ways. Maury tended to be "harder on himself" and his talk and actions often related to planning. This was especially so in writing when he talked about what he was "gonna do". Home visit information did not document this sense-making behavior beyond the classroom. Maury's grandmother, his legal guardian, said that he did not read at home unless he had a special school project. Grandmother noted that Maury liked school, almost never missed school, and that he drew but did not write at home. The following representative samples reveal Maury's sense making during the third year in whole language curriculum. In the first episode it is independent work time. Maury is searching, having just finished a book, for a favorite one.

> " You seen my Pinkerton?" he asked several children. Maury found his book, sat down, and read it through. He then went to the teacher and told her he read the whole book. Maury and his teacher began to work together. He wrote with her help. When Maury noticed an error as he reread his text he said " I keep messing up." Maury then erased and wrote the words he needed.
>
> Maury was writing by himself when he turned to the researcher and said, " I don't know what this says." Then he turned quickly to the book beside him and noted, " I can copy off that book." As he finished writing the word, He turned to the child beside him saying, "Me and Isaac read that other one- (book) want me to read that one (to you) ?"
>
> When the teacher finished reading to Maury and others in a small group, Maury said, " Can we write that story like we did the other one - - the graveyard. Do the same story, and read the story too?!"
>
> In independent work time Maury wrote independently for over ten minutes. He left his writing for a minute or two, then returned to it. Maury used a book nearby to find a word he wanted to spell and wrote more. He produced a book with three sections and announced repeatedly to others that he had written a chapter book.
>
> In March, Maury wrote after enlisting the teacher's support. He told her he wanted to write, I'm warning you. When the teacher repeated the word warning, Maury said " Hey, it (the word warning) starts like Willie." Later he announced, " Next I'm gonna write a book about leprechauns - it's gonna be little words in it."

Excerpts from teacher interviews:

> Maury's teacher commented " I've noticed that he (Maury) is learning more about reading and writing...it's clicking with him and he realizes, Yes, there are some things I know in here. He is beginning to use the words he knows in reading and writing." " Their (Maury included) reading levels are low. It's happening but it's slow. It's (nearly) January and when it hits ...it's like the year flies by and they won't be with me next year. I'm trying to push but push in the right way. I'm working on linking reading and writing-linking books and linking words. Doing reading recovery techniques."
>
> Later in the year his teacher noted "Maury has made a lot of progress. I have to keep telling myself that.... he had a good day today - - as far as producing. He wrote a story and my name without looking." By spring the teacher noted "In his own way (Maury) is moving toward it...there is a change (but) I'm more worried about his behavior (primarily getting along outside the classroom with other children) more than his academic progress. I think his reading is going to come along if he has the time to develop."

Maury's end-of-second grade standardized test reading scores were among the lowest of all the children tested. By May he had begun to read familiar texts in print governed ways (Sulzby, 1985). He consistently stopped on unknown words, tried to sound them out, and had other strategies. Maury used meaning, structure, and letter/sound cues, but his strategies were not balanced. It seemed as if a focus on graphophonic information "threw off" his use of meaning and structure or vice versa. Orchestration was the greatest problem.

In spite of the difficulties Maury experienced in learning to read and write and obvious personal struggles, he showed in talk and action that he understood himself to be a reader and writer. Maury had many favorite books and persisted in choosing to read and write independently even though both processes required great effort. He was extremely apt at getting the help he needed and became quite expert in arranging his environment in ways that enabled him to interact with written language in meaningful ways. At times

Maury showed his frustrations, but he was not passive and always worked hard on getting it right.

Description of Schemeka in the continuing year.

Background. Tests on written language in kindergarten showed knowledge at two areas. As a kindergartner Schemeka took initiative from the start, read along in group time, chose books, and frequently went to a quiet corner of the room to read. Schemeka worked on her own and with others. She exhibited metacognitive understandings and mature emergent reading behaviors. In both years of whole language curriculum, observations documented that Schemeka sat up front as close to the teacher as possible, commented frequently on stories, asked questions, expressed her opinion, and read along showing knowledge of many memorized books. In writing she produced letter groupings and some known words. First-grade writings showed knowledge about mapping letters and sounds in connected texts.

In first grade Schemeka chose books and read several daily. Her writings included narrative prose and story-like forms. Schemeka used books and the classroom environment to get the words she wanted to write. She drew, used punctuation, revised, and wrote in all contexts. Sense- making patterns demonstrated a strong sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Schemeka's pretest readings were 98% and 100% accurate. An extremely fluent reader, she self-monitored with great skill. Many reading strategies were difficult to track because of a high degree of automaticity. A mid-year sample on a self-selected, second-grade basal story showed 99% accuracy, excellent expression and fluency and self-monitoring. Her well-balanced strategies included use of meaning, structure, and visual information. Post test reading results were 100% accurate.

Reading interview results were similar. Schemeka said she was a good reader, talked about favorite books, said reading a lot was important to good reading and that she thought about stories after reading them. Many responses linked reading and writing. For example, she discussed thinking about stories when she went to bed at night and also thought she might write about them the next day in school. Post tests showed an increase in discussing things beyond school materials that could be read such as words on T.V., posters, and signs. Schemeka's writing interviews were also very similar. Both evidenced breadth in metacognitive knowledge. Schemeka said she was a good writer, that writing was fun and made her happy. She also talked about going over her stories to make them " longer and longer" or " better and better". Schemeka also noted that sometimes words were hard to spell and that it was a "... good thing we have dictionaries!" Outcomes on altered passages showed complete rejection of print that did not make sense. Metacognitive strategies scores were comparative high and retellings were strong with a gain of three points.

Writing in the continuing year. Early writings in second grade showed growth from first grade. Schemeka's narrative prose and initial paragraphs gave way to story forms. Artifacts showed an increase in written language features and reliance on "spin-off" stories, patterned after familiar books, diminished. More writings were based on personal experience and in this respect Schemeka's texts showed increasing complexity. As always, Schemeka revised and used many book conventions such as a dedication page. Spring writings included true story structure with character, conflict and solution, and sequenced events. Poetic writings also emerged and use of text-like phrases continued. Writings became longer, showed evidence of sustained efforts over several days, and revision. Schemeka usually wrote independently- although she collaborated at times, especially on class projects.

Sense making in the continuing year. Schemeka's talk and action in whole language curriculum demonstrated a robust pattern of sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence. This response was very consistent with her kindergarten and first-grade perceptions. Schemeka actively sought literacy interactions. She choose books and read them intently, talked about stories and her own understandings, and wrote independently and with peers. Other children often sought her advice. For example, one day Schemeka was writing on a large sheet of chart paper when another girl came up and asked Schemeka to listen to her story. Schemeka said, " Not now, I have to finish my story first." Schemeka continued to write with highly focused rereading and revising work for another 25 minutes. At that point, when the class was getting ready for lunch, the girl returned. She held out her paper and Schemeka turned and said, " Ok." as she glanced back at her writing. Both girls sat down on chairs near the chart paper stand and the story was read by the author. Neither the noise of lunch cards being distributed nor the lights being turned off in the classroom seemed to disturb either reader or listener. Teacher's observational notes also captured the nature of the Schemeka's interactions with her classmates. Schemeka was sitting down and reading when Sally, who was sitting beside her, said " I'm gonna write a story, I saw one bird, I saw two bird, I saw three birds." Schemeka said, " Sally, it would be better if you would put where you saw each bird." Sally thought this was a good idea and did it.

The following samples from field notes, teacher interviews, and a parent interview are representative of Schemeka's sense making. The context is reading and writing and work time in the first episode. Schemeka was reading independently.

> Schemeka read The Magic School Bus for over 40 minutes. Her reading was very strategic with a high degree of self-monitoring. After reading the book she came to the researcher and asked to talk about the part where the oxygen goes to the body. Schemeka wanted to clarify why the picture showed red and blue blood vessels.
>
> At the teacher's suggestion, Schemeka and a group of girls went to a long table and looked at books about space. The girls seemed to work in parallel fashion and Schemeka looked at a book for about 15 minutes. Then she wrote for the next 30 minutes using books as resources. Schemeka then read a book of poetry, and then another book after that.
> Both readings showed fluency and active processing for meaning and highly accurate reading. Later, Schemeka showed the researcher her writing on space and noted that she used the books to help her write the names of the planets - - she then read her story orally.

Excerpts from teacher interviews:

> Schemeka is really learning - - she is just reading up a storm. I would like to get her more... well she is involved in writing... but she will take long breaks. She will write a really neat story and then the next three or four stories are like, 'I Like Christmas'. It will be a couple of weeks and she will then write a fantastic story. You know, it may just be she needs time to get her to get her ideas going.

Schemeka goes back and forth. She loves to write about herself - she loves to write very simple things and then she will come up with this elaborate story...I think the little things are just the between until she gets another good idea. She is reading everything in sight. She is reading *Little House on the Prairie* right now. She and Tanya were really impressed when I told them I didn't read it until I was in the fourth grade. They were bound and determined they were going to finish it!

If it is possible I see them (Schemeka included) as even more independent. With her (and several other children) the big thing is writing non-fiction. They are writing to learn something rather than just enjoyment ...they will come and tell me what they have learned.... they say, 'Do you know what I just read?' I worry about them being stifled now (when they leave this classroom) Schemeka -- I don't think can be, she is so independent."

Parent interview information

Schemeka's father talked about her not being able to read and write *enough*! He noted that he really didn't know what to do sometimes. "Schemeka is so aggressive in her learning" Father noted that sometimes he wanted to say he would listen to her story in a little while but that she couldn't wait to read her writing to him. Father said Schemeka read more and more on her own, that she tired to read her older brother's books, and frequently asked her parents to buy her books they thought were too difficult. He noted that there was 'No change since last year except that she was even more eager to learn ..if that is possible! ' Father also expressed his concern about how to support Schemeka in school in the future.

Schemeka ended second grade much as she had begun kindergarten, an active, inquiring learner who was also very successful academically. Second-grade standardized test scores were average in reading with language expression at the 90th percentile. Results consistently documented a strong sense of self as a reader and writer. Schemeka persisted across all contexts, strove for accuracy, and showed a deep desire for written language interactions.

Description of Willie in the continuing year.

Background: Willie entered kindergarten with low scores on tests of written language knowledge. He seemed shy in classroom interactions and "sat back" during story time. Willie watched others closely, and spent some time getting comfortable with school. A few kindergarten written artifacts captured drawings, letter forms, efforts to write his name, and some copying. Willie was interested in storybooks and this interest was sustained throughout first grade when he actively chose books and interacted with them on his own. Willie had favorite books, he memorized those stories, and frequently told the memorized parts while using picture clues to elaborate when he read. Use of letter/sound knowledge was evident in reading and in writing in first grade. Willie wrote with great concentration and his compositions sometimes reflected writing goals and ideas that his current skills could not match. He nearly always showed a preference for writing with others and often took on the role of illustrator. Reading and writing samples indicated development in learning to read and write was pre-conventional. Willie began to read in print governed ways (Sulzby, 1985) by the end of first grade. His talk and action demonstrated a sense of self as a reader and a writer. Willie self-selected and persisted with written language tasks and was interested in accuracy.

Pre- and post second-grade assessments. Pretest reading showed that Willie read a basal story with 95% accuracy and that use of visual cues was somewhat weak. However, he used all three cueing systems, self-monitored, and self-corrected. A trade book story was 85% accurate. On this sample Willie did a good deal of rereading showing a persistent search for meaning. A mid-year reading was 96% accurate on a self-selected, second-grade basal story. Willie's reading documented self-correction, self-monitoring, and better balanced use of meaning, syntax, and graphophonic cues. In all three of these samples, Willie's fluency was not as good as expected given his accuracy.

School reports, samples of oral speech, and in class oral readings documented an articulation problem. The post test reading was strategic and 96% accurate.

Reading interviews were similar. Willie's responses showed metacognitive knowledge on both measures. On the post test he differed in that he said he "...didn't like to read for an hour...I'd rather write! " Pre and post test writing interviews were also very similar. Willie did not talk about specific authors spontaneously on the post test but said he often returned to his writing to "...make it better and longer so you can publish it." Spontaneous comments during pre- and post testing documented Willie's sense of himself as a reader and writer. His persistence in working with written language was also evident. For example, Willie talked about never giving up and about trying over and over. Results on altered passages were stable with clear rejections of nonsensical print, retellings varied by one point,and there was a five point gain on the measure of metacogntive reading strategies.

Writing in the continuing year. Early second grade artifacts showed little change from first-grade writing samples; however, by mid-year Willie's writing showed somewhat better fluency and indicated movement toward more complex text structures. For example, he began to use a story form more often. Willie's writing was not consistently coherent. When it was not, it seemed to reflect the problems he had with oral speech. Nearly all of Willie's written artifacts included drawings and many were written collaboratively over several days time. However, he wrote on his own too. Writing on his own was very important when he wanted to express deeply personal meanings such as a dream, his response to the Rodney King beating, or his thoughts about a rap singing group. Spring samples showed that Willie made some gains in fluency. Text structures included narrative prose, story-like forms, two "starts" on non-fiction pieces (snakes and insects), and one complete non-fiction piece about the planet earth. There was little if any evidence on reliance on known stories. That is, he no longer used storybooks to structure his writing. Willie wrote as he always had, with intensity on his own when he was "inspired" but usually with others. He worked hard at writing, showed an interest in spelling words accurately, revised, and expressed his understanding that he was a writer.

Sense making in the continuing year. Several data sources supported that Willie's sense of self as a reader and writer was stable throughout second grade. He consistently persisted in reading . Willie showed some avoidance in writing on his own when compared to children such as Schemeka or Isaac.

Close review of the data indicated instances of avoidance were fairly short, i.e. from three to ten minutes. Five instances of avoidance were recorded in classroom observations. Importantly, during those times, he exhibited no passivity. For example, although Willie might stop writing and spend time on illustrating, during that time he usually engaged in talk about spelling words and about the writing topic. Samples drawn from field notes, teacher interviews, and parent information documented such literate behaviors as indicated by the representative samples below.

> Willie read a Garfield book to the teacher and read a book with Isaac. Then he sat beside a boy and wrote for about 15 minutes. He made comments about what he was going to write. Later as Isaac was reading, Willie simply began to read with him while leaning over Isaac's shoulder. Sometimes Isaac and Willie read in unison, then one would "trail off" while the other picked up the lead. This kind of collaborative reading continued until the end of the book.
>
> Willie engaged in reading a series of bear books as he sat alone at the desk where these books were kept. His reading was very strategic, and he seemed to skim some of the text. His comments indicated good comprehension." Now I know where the wax came from!" he said after reading the part that revealed the solution to the story problem. After finishing this book, he took another from the basket and read it through in a similar way. Willie commented critically, " How (could) Papa build that!" pointing to very elaborate illustration of a tree house.
> Willie stopped reading, went to the bathroom and returned in less than four minutes. He immediately picked up another bear book and read it - then he walked around the room for about two minutes, and with his hands in his pockets, stopped to read the print on his classmates' paintings which hung across the classroom on a clothesline.

Excerpts from teacher interviews:

- " Willie, as far as his reading (goes) I think his speech is kind of slowing him down. Even just the tense of words like was and were ... and I think people just accept it because he doesn't speak well."
- "Willie, I see a big difference in his writing.... he is spreading things out - - you can tell where the words stop and start. I still see a lot of problems with him because of language. ...He doesn't use the right grammar in his stories a lot of time.... I have to sit down and say now where does this sentence stop....then he (can) go back and say the sentence... so I've seen a big difference in his writing. ...he is writing more story type things that have to do with himself.... He's (reading) really well. He's reading on about the third grade level. He's made progress in reading- he is reading more fluently but (sometimes) there again the language and the understanding of grammatically correct sentence still - - it hurts him."
- "If it is possible I see them (Willie included) as even more independent. He has more reason to write and reading and writing is more connected. They (Willie included) say 'Oh, I'm gonna write about that.'

Parent interview information:

Willie's mother said that Willie liked school, that he had liked school since kindergarten, and that he loved his teacher. She commented that Willie liked to read very much, that she had purchased Highlights magazine for him, and that he read it by himself much of the time. Mother noted that Willie often wrote at home and particularly after going somewhere with his family. He liked to write about places he went and the things they did together. She said she was happy with his progress and had noticed no changes from last year " .... He is as happy as ever in second grade."

Willie's standardized test scores in reading were "average" at the end of second grade. In routine classroom readings he read higher level material well. His report card indicated Willie was reading at third grade level, that he enjoyed all types of literature, and that his writing had increased significantly. Willie ended second grade with continued success in learning more about reading and writing and with a robust pattern of sense of self as a reader and writer and persistence.

Limitations and validity

This investigation's insights and findings on young learners' interpretations of instruction are limited to urban, low-socioeconomic children who had whole language curriculum and instruction in the kindergarten and first grade. The results are restricted to primary students who experienced a transition to skills-based or continued in whole language curriculum. As noted in McIntyre (1992), some results will be generalized as readers of this report "see the children" and as these descriptions resonate with readers' experience and personal knowledge of other learners.

This research documented a third year of information on the same children. Learners' sense making was identified by patterns of talk and action within the classrooms. Gaining insights into the cognitive and affective interpretations of young children is problematic and involves a degree of individual, intuitive information. With this in mind, this investigation was grounded in rigorous methodology and carefully carried out. Multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources, statistical tests, interrater checks, outside expert analysis, and outside expert review supported internal validity. Finally, external validity was realized through the rich, in-depth data on focal children (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

CONCLUSIONS

The children in the Transition Group were successful in the skills-based curriculum; none were retained in second grade and all focal children achieved academically. The children in the Continuing Group showed similar academic achievement, and even more success in writing, with no loss of literate behaviors. As noted in Dahl & Freppon (1992), a distinction between literacy skills and literate behaviors is central to understanding between-group results. Literacy skills, used to decode and encode, are important in learning to read and write. Literate behaviors, described in this report on children's sense making, include a variety of responses that exist in literate people (Heath, 1986). Literate behaviors are the hallmark of learners at any age and, in this line of research, include initiative, persistence, and a sense of self as a reader and writer. Literacy skills and literate behaviors coalesce to produce a *disposition for learning* (Dahl & Freppon, 1992).

The results of this study indicated that the Transition Group, after two years of whole language instruction, had literacy skills which met the demands of a traditional classroom. However, there was a clear decline in literate behaviors in the Transition Group. Findings documented a loss of positive affect such as engagement in self-selected reading and writing. Such responses were critical components of the constellation of learner interpretations documenting a *disposition for learning* in these same children in the Dahl & Freppon (1992) study.

The findings presented in this report mirror the complexities of literacy learning in young children. Results show that the influence of skills-based and whole language curriculum, individual development in learning to read and write, and the individual child's stance are dynamic, interacting factors.

Results of pre- and post tests did not yield statistically significant differences between the Transition and Continuing groups. Normed tests also showed minimal differences. The children in both groups were similar in other ways as well. For example, much of the reading interview data were parallel. In addition, oral reading samples and reading schemata findings indicated that individual development in learning to read plays a powerful role. Children in both groups varied in reading proficiency . The Continuing Group gained more in reading accuracy from pre- to post test. This three percent greater gain could be attributed to development since this group began with lower accuracy scores and less well-balanced reading strategies. Results on the reading schemata measure suggested that individual development in learning to read cut across curricular differences.

Several pre-to-post-test measures showed small but consistent differences between the two groups. These findings were specific to curricular differences and are noteworthy because of their consistency. The whole language curriculum stressed talk about stories, personal interactions with literature, learners' awareness of reading strategies, and writing. On retelling and metacognitive measures the Continuing Group scored higher and the end-of-year interviews indicated greater personal investment in literacy and breadth of understanding. The skills-based curriculum stressed cursive handwriting and correct spelling. Writing often consisted of copying from the board or completing assignments under specific guidelines such as the number of sentences. The writing interviews showed negative changes in the Transition Group. Not surprisingly, these learners, who experienced the transition to a skills-based curriculum, declined in confidence in themselves as writers and their view of writing as something they could do well.

In this study, the sense that learners made of a transition to skills-based curriculum and continuance in whole language curriculum were revealed. Traditional measures, such as standardized tests, did not capture significant differences in these two groups of children. In areas specific to some academic skills there appeared to be no or very little change associated with curriculum differences. However, other data captured learner changes in the Transition Group.

Findings documented negative responses in the Transition Group that seemed clearly linked to curriculum. These changes were strongly associated with learner initiative, motivation, and cognitive action. Generally, skills-based instruction is curriculum centered. Children are expected to respond with a high degree of accuracy and to master specific skills. Learner choice, initiative, preference, and decision making are not stressed. In this study, some focal children adjusted to the skills-based curriculum by becoming very passive. These children, who had average to above average academic skills, also appeared to "put aside their knowledge" in some contexts. Unfortunately, this response is not uncommon in poor,urban children in public schools. Passivity and actual student deferment of personal knowledge in skills-based classrooms has been documented previously in Purcell-Gates & Dahl (1991). Importantly, the passive children in the Purcell-Gates and Dahl study had never experienced whole language or made a transition to a different curriculum. Their school experience had been entirely in skills-based curriculum. This finding, and outcomes of the current investigation, suggests that passivity and deferment of personal knowledge may not be linked to low-SES but rather to curriculum. In the current study passivity occured in some children in skills-based curriculum regardless of prior experience and previous high levels of initiative and motivation.

Dahl & Freppon (1992) have indicated that primary children in both skills-based and whole language classrooms were similar in some beginning literacy skills. However, they also showed that several sense-making patterns of children from these two curricula clearly differed. For example, the children from whole language classrooms were more highly motivated and cognitively active. Importantly, passivity and learner deferment of personal knowledge did not emerge as a sense-making pattern. In addition, the children from whole language classrooms were better writers (Dahl, Freppon, & McIntyre, 1992). The current study confirms these findings and strengthens the claim that whole language curriculum fosters an increase in writing and writing knowledge, learner initiative, and a cognitively active stance toward literacy.

Changes in the skills-based classroom involved in the current study positively affected the children. Learner engagement was improved by a skills-based curriculum that included peer interactions and collaborative work, reading children's literature, and increased, flexible writing opportunities. However, although these classroom changes reduced passivity they did not restore the sense-making behaviors that marked a *disposition for learning* in the Transition Group.

In contrast, all the children who continued to experience whole language curriculum consistently evidenced the array of sense-making behaviors identified as a *disposition for learning* . These learners strove for accuracy and had a keen sense of their achievements and limitations as readers and writers. Generally, whole language curriculum is learner centered. Children are expected to choose reading and writing interactions of their own volition, to acquire a critical and inquiring response toward literature, and to engage in composition. Successive approximations to adult-like reading and writing are valued and supported. Over the third year in the whole language curriculum, children's interpretations reflected these instructional goals and philosophy.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to describe the ways two groups of urban, low-socioeconomic children interpreted different literacy curriculum in second grade after experiencing whole language instruction in the first two years. This investigation builds on a line of research on the same population (Dahl, & Freppon, 1992; Dahl, Freppon, & McIntyre, 1992; Freppon, & Dahl, 1991; Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991; Purcell-Gates, 1989; McIntyre, 1992; McIntyre & Freppon, 1992). This line of research contributes to the knowledge base by documenting young children's knowledge construction from the learners' perspective. These investigations add to understanding the effects of different kinds of instructional contexts on students we worry most about and who all too often fail in school. (Allen & Mason,1989; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991; Smith-Burke, 1989). Findings are important for several reasons, but chiefly because early difficulties in school tend to persist throughout children's lives (An Imperiled Generation, 1988). Despite major intervention and remedial efforts (primarily within the boundaries of traditional curriculum) poor, urban children generally do not experience success in public schools. Classroom-based research on these children has been limited (Allen & Mason, 1989); thus, this current investigation and the line of research upon which it builds provides valuable information.

The previous study of poor, urban children in three skills-based sites documented that, "Self-directed cognitive activity seems to be one of the keys to successful interpretation of skills-based, school literacy instruction. Cognitive compliancy, on the other hand, appears to lead to increased failure" (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991, p. 29). Purcell-Gates and Dahl posited the notion that self-direction and independence were facilitated by higher levels of prior knowledge or more advanced literacy skills. This idea was based on the fact that the passive children they studied in skills-based classrooms were also children who entered school with less knowledge or who were less proficient learners.

Dahl and Freppon (1992), and the currently study, expanded on the Purcell-Gates & Dahl project by investigating a highly similar population in two whole language sites and comparing to two of the skills-based sites. The findings of these studies indicated that curriculum was a pivotal factor in promoting self-directed cognitive activity. In the Dahl & Freppon study, an engaged stance was achieved by learners in the whole language curriculum after two years regardless of entering knowledge or academic proficiency. The same level of engagement was sustained in the same children during the third year in whole language curriculum in the current study. This is an important finding based on three years of classroom research on the same children and five years of classroom research on very similar populations.

Becoming literate is a complex and dynamic task involving both cognitive and affective dimensions. Learning to be a reader and writer involves transactions among numerous factors such as the individual learner, the curriculum and instruction, and the classroom social milieu. Children's sense making demonstrated that instruction was interpreted differently by learners themselves. As established in Dahl & Freppon (1992), children with a disposition for learning have specific literacy skills and literate behaviors.

Literate behaviors such as those described in this report are as essential to learning as any skill. Without question, public school students in the U. S. today must become learners for life. To do so they must learn to reflect on their own literacy actions, interact persistently with reading and writing on a personal level, and learn to "take on" school tasks of their own volition. Positive motivational and attitudinal factors are essential to successful learning (Allen & Mason, 1989; Au, 1991; Dahl & Freppon, 1992; Matthewson, 1976; Turner, 1991; Wigfield & Asher 1984). The findings of the current and past investigations suggest that whole language curriculum offers the kind of instructional environment supportive of both literacy skill and literate behavior learning. In the classrooms studied, neither skills-based nor whole language curriculum seemed to *speed the process* of learning to read. However, the writing products of students in whole language were greater in amount and quality.

Implications for instruction and suggestions for research

The question, "How will children who experience whole language in the early grades do in 'regular' skills-based classrooms?" is often asked. For those children participating in this study some answers to that question are, (a) " These children have adequate literacy skills and succeed academically.", (b) "Some children encountering skills-based curriculum become passive and experience a loss of previously well motivated responses toward reading and writing.", and (c) " Children having behaviors that show a *disposition for learning* decline significantly in this kind of talk and action in a skills-based curriculum."

The children in the Transition Group had the literacy skills necessary for success in the skills-based classroom. However, two of the four focal learners suffered significant loss of motivated behaviors in the first semester. During this time, children often worked alone at their desks completing seatwork assignments. It was in this context that learner passivity was at it's height. However, the mid-year changes initiated in this skills-based classroom had a powerful, positive effect on all four children and particularly on those who had become passive. Opportunities to work with other children in collaborative ways, read children's literature, and write more were critical to success. This finding indicates that when these opportunities are present in skills-based instruction children benefit. However, as noted in Goodman (1992), integrating collaborative learning or even using children's literature do not a whole language classroom make.

This classroom remained essentially skills-based. And these focal children did not regain the behaviors documenting a disposition for learning that had been prominent at the end of first-grade. It may be that learner choice, ownership, and decision making, which are fostered in whole language classrooms, are pivotal factors in the acquisition of a disposition for learning. Or, possibly, teacher attitude, ways of scaffolding, and evaluation techniques are more critical. Future research, experimental or quasi-experimental, could shed light on these questions. It is also crucial that further ethnographic and longitudinal research be carried out in classrooms. In the researcher's opinion all elements in whole language such as, learner choice and ownership, reflective teaching, process oriented evaluation, literature, and teachers' belief that reading and writing are language processes are essential. Importantly, the interpersonal relationships that evolve in whole language classrooms seem pivotal (Dillard, 1992).

Current project findings and related investigations (Dahl & Freppon, 1992, McIntyre & Freppon, 1992; McCallum, Moore, & Whitlow,1992) indicate that children receiving whole language instruction perform adequately on formal and informal measures of learning. In this investigation, the Continuing Group showed no less academic growth. Importantly, the majority of these children wrote more complex and lengthy texts. Because writing is an essential academic skill that functions as "gate keeper" to many future learning opportunities, it is critical that children experience frequent, flexible writing in risk-free environments in every classroom. When this skills-based curriculum provided more writing opportunities, the children's written products showed a change in length, and for some, in quality. Future research could contribute to understanding more exactly the features of instruction that best support children's writing. For example, it may be that the use of children's literature and evaluation of writing are key factors. In the researcher's opinion, the nature of teachers' and children's talk, reading materials, and evaluation are critical.

Finally, the Transition Group's former whole language kindergarten and first-grade teachers consistently taught skills associated with the graphophonic, semantic, and syntactic cueing systems operating in written language (Freppon, 1992b). It is important to understand the findings of this report in this light. This whole language teaching was always carried out in meaningful contexts and in risk-free ways. For example, letter/sound relations were taught explicitly and implicitly in individual reading and writing conferences and in some whole class activities. Further, evaluation very rarely took the form of testing but rather teacher observations and use of portfolios predominated. Reading and writing events always focused on making sense of written language. The syntactic system of English was emphasized through the use of children's literature and, especially, in writing. Due to the nature of whole language curriculum, the fourth cueing system, pragmatics, also played a significant role. For example, the kindergarten and first-grade teachers took children's interests, preferences, and the reading and writing environment quite seriously. Their classrooms were designed and redesigned to "fit" children's evolving responses. Because whole language classrooms vary, future research needs to be done in order to explore the nature of this instruction more thoroughly. Investigations of teachers changing their practice and evaluation techniques are needed.

In sum, our work is just beginning. The results of this line of research show the importance of studying learners in classrooms. There is a critical need for research on children's knowledge construction and the sense they make of schooling. Researchers need to investigate the dynamics among the development of individual children, the teachers' instructional approach and procedures, and classroom environments through the early and middle grades.

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APPENDIX A

This appendix provides a description of the skills-based classroom and a description of the whole language classroom during the first and second semesters of second grade.

Skills-Based

It is important to note that classroom interactions remained predominantly skills-based throughout the year even though changes in the second semester were evident (i.e. use of different reading materials and different contexts for student work). The change process observed in this classroom was consistent with research on teacher change in practice (Buswinka, 1989). Materials and specific routine changes, such as reading children's literature in small student groups, usually occur fairly readily. However, changes involving teacher thinking, philosophy, and evaluation take time. Research indicates that change in teacher thinking and practice is a slowly evolving process even when it is teacher initiated.

The philosophy grounding the practice in the skills-based classroom in this study was consistent throughout year. Several teacher interviews, regular classroom observations, and informal conversations documented that the teacher cheerfully and cooperatively engaged in implementing: (a) different reading materials, (b) more frequent student writing, and (c) new ways for children to work together. The teacher said she was interested in exploring changes recommended to her; however, she also made it clear that these changes were carried out because the principal asked that they be implemented .

Instructional materials and some routines used after the mid-year break differed from the first-half of the school year. These changes were integrated with well established ways of teaching. For example, when children read a trade book story rather than a basal story, flash cards were made and used, and teaching plans included reading for enjoyment and identification of a specific number of vocabulary words. The following section provides a representative description of the first and second semesters in the skills-based, second-grade classroom.

On a typical morning in the first semester children began the day by sitting quietly in their seats during morning announcements, attendance taking, lunch count, and the pledge to the flag. The morning board work was then explained by the teacher with children reading the written directions when called upon. As this proceeded the teacher often went through the worksheet and textbook assignments to make sure children understood the reading and writing tasks. Often children were called on to provide answers to questions during this time. An emphasis on correct answers, neatness, completion of the assigned tasks, and grading was evident. Reading assignments usually consisted of workbook or worksheet pages to be completed for skill practice. Students then worked quietly and independently at their desks while the teacher met with reading groups of five to eight children at a round table near the back of the room. In each ability-based reading group, basal stories were read in round robin fashion and additional skill assignments given. Children doing seatwork came to the teacher and sat in a chair near the reading group to get help when they needed it. Just before the mid-year break, the teacher began to sometimes read aloud to the children. Trade books from the library also were displayed on the chalkboard shelf at that time.

After the mid-year break, children began the day by sitting quietly in their seats during morning announcements, attendance taking, lunch count, and the pledge to the flag. As the school year proceeded, teacher read alouds during the morning period occurred more frequently. Children listened to the story and responded to teacher questions or comments when called on. The board work assignments were explained by the teacher with children sometimes reading the written directions when called on. The teacher often reviewed the writing assignments and worksheets, called on children to answer questions, and asked if they had any questions to make sure students understood their assignments. An emphasis on correct answers, neatness, completion of the assigned tasks, and grading was evident. Reading assignments included partner reading with trade books and some written work such as identifying and listing vocabulary words or writing a response to several questions about the story. Creative activities such as writing the narrative for a cartoon work page (by filling in speech bubbles) or completing a "story starter" were usually given. Generally, such writing assignments replaced the English textbook. By drawing names in random selection, children were then matched with a partner. These partner groups worked together to complete assignments. Often, there was little conversation between partners about the actual reading and writing content. Although there were times when learners spontaneously helped each other by spelling words, giving words in reading, or clarifying assignment directions. In these partner groups, children consistently demonstrated their desire to complete tasks accurately and efficiently. Most often children worked in parallel fashion, made comments about how they were progressing through the assignments, and interspersed their work with occasional, casual talk which seemed to be quite enjoyable. Such talk almost never interrupted the flow of task completion. Children were sometimes told they could select the order in which they would do their assignments. In such cases they frequently elected to begin with the creative writing or cartoon paper. Students could sit where they pleased, talk, read, and work together as long as the room did not get too noisy. As children worked the teacher moved about the room helping with assignments and listening to individual children read. Individual reading sessions with the teacher were very consistent with previous reading group instructional goals and practice. There was an emphasis on correct word reading and correct responses to questions. Casual talk between students and the teacher about the story also occurred as it had all year. These reading events seemed enjoyable to both children and the teacher. Students continued to go to the teacher with questions about their work much as they had in the past. By February, basal reading materials were completely replaced by trade books. On one occasion the entire class was observed participating in a "round robin" reading event in which each child read twice and then the teacher read to finish the story. However, most of the time children read in partner groups, and traditional reading groups were no longer observed. Partners read together taking turns reading a page or a paragraph of the assigned story.

Assessment and evaluation was product oriented with work completion, neatness, and correctness valued. Nearly all written assignments including worksheets or workbooks were graded traditionally with a number or letter grade marking. Reading success was identified by accuracy and level of difficulty. Report cards had letter grades A through F.

Whole Language

The whole language classroom in this study was identified through several measures and remained consistent in philosophy and practice throughout the school year. Reading and writing were viewed as language processes. Curriculum and instruction in this classroom reflected the perspective that written language is learned in functional and meaningful ways in social contexts. Reading materials consisted of children's literature, trade books, information books, a variety of print sources from the community, and the teachers' and children's writings. The areas of study and ways of learning arose from the needs, interests, and expertise of students and the teacher. Student self-selection of reading and writing tasks, within the instructional environment designed by the teacher, was a part of every day classroom life. Teaching and learning reflected the apprenticeship model. The following discussion provides a representative description of classroom interactions during the school year in this second-grade, whole language classroom.

On a typical day the children began by working independently or in small groups for the first hour. Students were expected to choose to read or write. At times one child or a small group of children worked on a writing task. However, most learners chose reading. A low noise level or "hum of reading voices " was maintained as many children read orally. The teacher circulated among the children, read with individuals, observed, and kept notes on children and materials. When the teacher read with a child, she nearly always taught some reading or writing strategies. Notes were written on teaching plans and individual children's strengths and weaknesses. As the school year progressed the children read together in small groups in which the same book, usually a chapter book, was read by all. Often these groups were begun by the children themselves. Learners were expected to use this hour to gain fluency and to try challenging or new books.

This hour was followed by a 'whole group time' in which the children gathered on the rug and the teacher read aloud. Readings included songs, chants, stories, and poetry. Discussion was in a conversational mode with clear expectations that children would participate. In this group period the teacher often focused on what " hooked" readers on stories. That is, children discussed what they liked and thought about the stories or other reading. Story specifics such as what had taken place, meanings, character actions, etc. were also discussed.

An afternoon 'whole group time' included skill teaching such as reading strategies, use of syntax and letter/sound cues, spelling in word families, revising writings, etc. Materials for this instruction were often children's actual writing or reading. Modeling and demonstration of reading and writing were a primary focus.

Following the morning whole group time, the teacher often introduced one or more planned activities such as writing a big book, creating a mural, or writing a letter to an author. Throughout the year these activities involved particular themes such as author studies or science and ecology projects. Children could choose a teacher planned activity or any other reading or writing work during this period. In this time, some children participated in several activities and some read or wrote one book or wrote on a single topic the entire period. Consistently, children read, wrote, and talked with each other and the teacher about reading and writing content. Again the teacher monitored the class, helped individual children, and assisted with small groups. She listened to children read, read with them, and held writing conferences. In writing conferences skills were taught and practiced, and presentations of children's writings to the class were discussed. For example, the child and the teacher might work on spelling, sentence structure, capital letters, and story details. They also made decisions about options such as publishing, reading aloud to the class, making a poster, or a book.

During reading and writing work time, the teacher also taught small reading groups based on student need and interest. These groups varied throughout the year and children were free to join any group in progress. The children and teacher talked about books, read together, and read independently. Nearly always, specific skills and strategy teaching on the cueing systems operating in written language occurred. The teacher also held 'Book Talks,' and in these small groups she read stories of similar themes and or writing style and encouraged children to discuss these elements.

Evaluation was carried out through teacher observations, anecdotal notes, and reading and writing samples. Evaluation was generally process oriented and focused on the strengths of each child. Report cards were primarily narrative.